Challenging the positive, popular perception of Transcendental Meditation

Mike Doughney

Conference presentation, Summer 2022

Hello, and welcome. My name is Mike Doughney, and my presentation is on Transcendental Meditation. My background is that of a meditator who began the practice while a college student at the end of 1977. Later, after connecting with other former meditators, I became a critic of it and the organizations offering it. I've had the opportunity, over nearly thirty years, to collect for study and criticism, materials produced by the TM organization and other related organizations. I'll be showing you some of them in the next few minutes.

My talk addresses anyone with misgivings or concerns about TM. But my primary focus lately has been on people who are on the threshold of potential involvement with TM, as a participant, or as a researcher, administrator or other official who may come into contact with advocates for the TM program.

Challenging the positive, popular perception of Transcendental Meditation

The primary marketing points that can be challenged when presented by marketers of TM:

- Not a religion
- Not a philosophy
- Not a change in lifestyle
- Nothing to believe in

All of these (and others) are not necessarily true

(and could be considered in themselves tenets of a religious faith, which denies the obvious)

I've titled this session "Challenging the positive, popular perception of Transcendental Meditation." That challenge starts with a focus on TM's primary marketing points: that it's not a religion, philosophy, or change in lifestyle, and that it offers, or requires, nothing to believe in. These assertions aren't necessarily true, and the four of them could be considered the tenets of a religious faith. But unlike what most of us recognize as a faith - a series of affirmations - this is, instead, a set of denials, an almost upside-down, contrarian sort of faith that ritualistically denies its own obvious features. TM teachers rely on the ambiguity between the act of simply closing one's eyes and meditating, which itself may not be a religion, philosophy or lifestyle, and everything else that comes with participation in the Transcendental Meditation program.

All of these points appear on pages 27 and 28 of David Lynch Foundation CEO and 50-year TM teacher Bob Roth's recent (2018) TM promoting book, *Strength in Stillness.* I'll revisit these points later on in this presentation, and in these notes I'll refer to this book to show how Transcendental Meditation and its surrounding theory or philosophy, is described by its teachers.

What Transcendental

Meditation is

(and is not)

See the appendix for a listing of the sources used in the video shown at this point in the presentation.

What Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation Program is

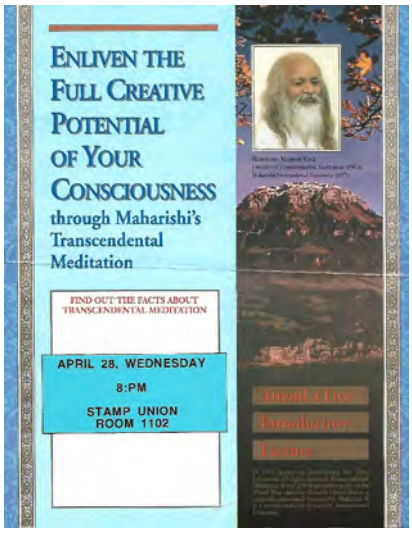
- Method of mantra meditation practice and instruction developed by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, its founder

- Personal instruction/initiation (generally, for a fee) by a “certified TM teacher” loyal to Maharishi and the organization

This meditation is formally called “Maharishi’s Transcendental Meditation Program,” since the name “Transcendental Meditation” is sometimes confused with other unrelated practices or products. This program surrounds a method of mantra meditation devised by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Distinguishing aspects of the program are personal instruction, or initiation, by a “certified TM teacher” trained by, and loyal to, the TM organization and, while living, by Maharishi himself.

What Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation Program is

- 7 part instruction process over 6 days, starting with an introductory lecture
- 6-8 hours of other information (indoctrination) peripheral to meditation
- Meditation instruction is first step of a program including other products, services, courses



1993 campus recruitment poster

The seven-part TM instruction process usually extends over 6 days, with 6 to 8 hours of other information, which might be called indoctrination, relating to the practice. These introductory and follow-up sessions produce an expectation of benefits, a sense of participation in a larger social movement, and an emphasis on regular practice even when no benefit, or even detrimental effects, are experienced. Instruction in Transcendental Meditation is just the first step of a much longer, elaborate program which includes advanced courses, lectures, products and services.

I collected this poster at the University of Maryland some time around 1993.

What Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation Program is

- Instruction *always* includes a devotional, private initiation ritual ("*puja*") which establishes a power dynamic with a traditional authority worthy of reverence, respect and deference, intending to produce a meditator/devotee

Example of a puja table

Private instruction always begins with the puja, a devotional initiation ritual which is called by all TM teachers a "simple thank-you ceremony," the details of which are never disclosed beforehand. Its actual purpose, I believe, is to establish a power dynamic with an allegedly traditional authority, an attempt to foster awe, reverence, respect for and deference to the organization and its teachings. It creates ambiguity about the meditator's relationship with that authority, as something other than a mere customer. The organization will never teach TM without performance of the puja in the presence of every new meditator.

Under the usual circumstances, the prospective meditator must bring fruit, flowers and handkerchief to this ceremony, as seen on the tray in this photo. I've been told that, in institutional settings, these items are provided and they need not be brought by the initiate.

Also used in the ritual are a painting of Maharishi's teacher, Brahmananda Saraswati aka Guru Dev, a candle, camphor which is burned, rice, sandalwood paste, incense and water. All of these items are symbolic offerings to divine beings which carry meaning, known to TM teachers or leadership, in the TM instruction milieu, which I've explained in a series of articles, Demystifying the Puja.

What Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation Program is

- While TM is sometimes considered "Hinduism," I maintain that "TM is as Indian (or Hindu) as Chow Mein is Chinese"
- Elements are of Hindu, Vedic and Buddhist origin, with self-help rhetoric addressing middle to upper class preoccupations and values
- Bits and pieces of "Hinduism" are decontextualized into a new amalgam (I've seen it called "Maheshism") designed to be sold in the West as a product that's supposedly a "solution to all problems"

TM logo with the banyan tree, a sacred Hindu symbol for supreme divinity (the *Trimurti*), also used by Maharishi International University

While TM is sometimes equated with Hinduism, I would say that TM is as Hindu as Chow Mein is Chinese. It's its own syncretion, combining elements of Eastern spirituality with Western self-help rhetoric, designed to be sold as a "solution to all problems."

The TM logo is that of the banyan tree, considered in India to be symbolic of supreme divinity.

"This puja is performed under a banyan tree which is considered to be the main idol of this festival which symbolically represents Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu, and Lord Shiva. The root represents Lord Brahma, the stem represents Lord Vishnu and the upper portion is Lord Shiva."

From a description of a Hindu festival appearing on a website published by one of the Maharishi-branded commercial entities in India. Vat Savitri Vrat: Puja Rituals and Significance.

(continues on next page)

What Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation Program is

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TM logo with the banyan tree, a sacred Hindu symbol for supreme divinity (the *Trimurti*), also used by Maharishi International University

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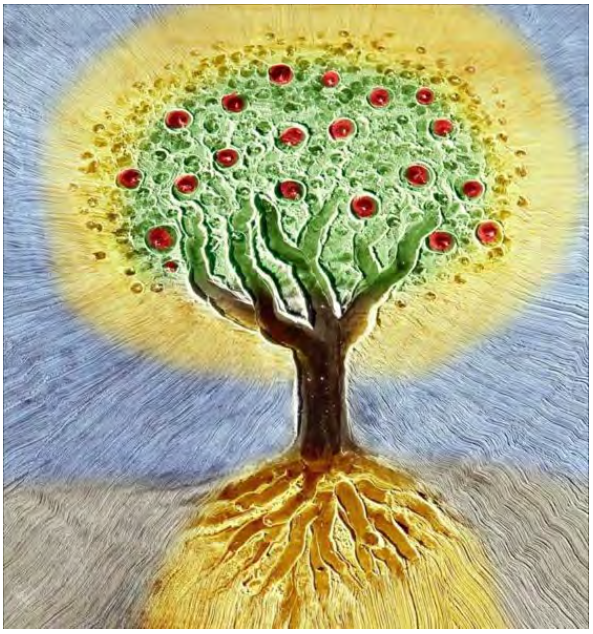
What was described in that article is a puja ritual performed in India that's very different from that which is performed in TM initiation, as most of them are.

Maharishi: "what we are doing here is the most simplified version out of the whole thing," contrasting the TM five-minute puja with a traditional puja that might take 4 hours or more (recorded at a 1969 teacher training course).



Though the banyan tree is a ubiquitous TM symbol and logo, and David Lynch has painted a similar tree (above), its religious significance is never openly discussed, to my knowledge, within the TM movement. Meanwhile, in India the meaning of this tree in Hinduism is widely known, as is explained in this article.

What Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation Program is not

- Transcendental Meditation and TM aren't registered trademarks worldwide (they are in North America)
- Names are now used by others, often online, for other forms of meditation, sometimes including mindfulness, also music and other trance and dissociation inducing activities

- Methods taught through books, media, apps are not this program - though TM now has an app to encourage practice and reinforce its doctrines
- Any method mentioning control or awareness of breath, or deliberately clearing the mind of thoughts, is not Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation

The “Transcendental Meditation” and “TM” names are now often being used to describe other practices and products by others unrelated to this specific program. These names aren’t trademarked worldwide, though they are in North America.

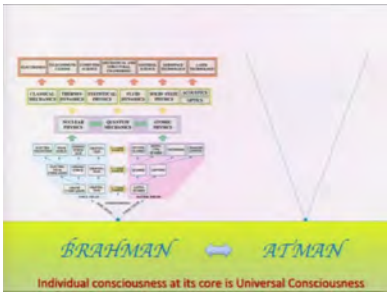
Meditation methods taught entirely through books, media, and online apps, or mentioning mindfulness, or control of breath or thoughts, aren’t connected with this program. The TM organization now offers an app, but it is not used for the primary part of TM individual instruction.

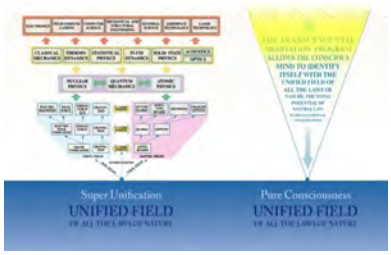
Searching online for “Transcendental Meditation” returns a menagerie of other people and practices unrelated to Maharishi's TM, particularly on Twitter. It's sometimes described, by a few people, as an existential threat to civilization, or Christianity – a legacy of the reactions, or over-reactions, to TM by religious leaders that were common in the 1970's. In reality, whatever mass movement that was beginning to form back then has largely disappeared, and it's very much past its prime today. It should now be regarded as a relatively marginal religious sect, with potentially significant impact on those people who are involved with it or come into contact with it. It is also still working to obtain government support, and to gain entry into schools, including public schools, and medical institutions.

Original graphic from a random tweet

Questionable assertions made during TM marketing and instruction

- Mentions of a “source of thought,” of creativity, or a universal consciousness are sanitized euphemisms for the concept of supreme divinity, impersonal god or ultimate reality (Brahman) from Eastern religious/spiritual traditions





Slides from 2 different presentations by MIU president John Hagelin, 2014

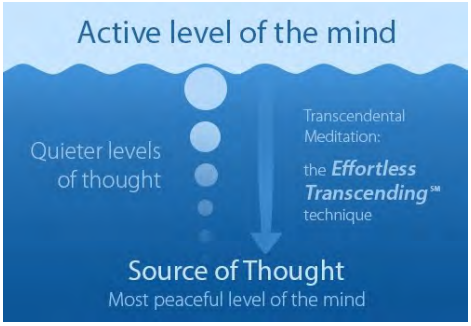
Many questionable assertions are made during TM marketing and instruction.

One prominent claim that turns up in the first few minutes of a TM introductory lecture is the existence of a “source of thought” or “field of consciousness” that may be contacted through regular TM practice, frequently described with the word “unbounded.” The many terms they use to describe this so-called “field” are pseudonyms for a supreme divinity or “intelligence that runs the universe” indistinguishable from what many people would recognize as an impersonal God.

John Hagelin, who has used these two illustrations in two conference presentations in 2014, is the president of the movement's Maharishi International University (since 2016) and was the U.S. Presidential candidate of the TM-directed Natural Law Party in the 1992, 1996 and 2000 elections. Hagelin has attempted, since the mid-1980's, to link unified field theory and human consciousness in this fashion. While he has been a legitimate researcher in theoretical physics, his attempt to establish this link to Maharishi's Vedic model of consciousness, and thus to Transcendental Meditation, "infuriates his former collaborators," according to a 1992 Nature article.

Questionable assertions made during TM marketing and instruction

- Transcendental Meditation supposedly allows the conscious mind to contact this “source of thought,” a state of “restful alertness” or deep rest which then “dissolves” stress and results in benefits to the individual, society and the planet



These concepts are out in plain sight but are couched in pseudo-scientific, sanitized, nonreligious terms to avoid tainting the fundamental claim that “TM is not a religion.” Regular contact with this “source of thought” supposedly “dissolves” stress and results in tranquility and orderliness at all levels of human existence, up to and including “world peace.”

To quote the typical TM teacher's description in the first few minutes of an introductory lecture (*Strength in Stillness,* page 16), with questionable, pseudo-scientific notions in bold:

> “Let’s return to the ocean analogy yet again: there are active, often turbulent waves on the surface, but there is calm at its depth. In the same way, **we hypothesize** that while the mind is active on the surface, deep within is a level that is calm yet alert; silent yet wide awake. The **ancient meditation texts** refer to it as the “source of thought” or “pure consciousness”—a field of limitless creativity, intelligence, and energy within. **Scientists** give it a more clinical description: a state of **“restful alertness.””**

(continued)

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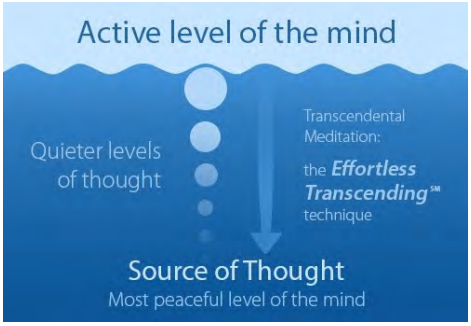

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- “we hypothesize:” This is not a “hypothesis” but a statement of absolutist doctrine that is core to the TM organization and Maharishi's underlying, sanitized interpretation of Vedic scripture...

- “ancient meditation texts” are in fact those Vedic scriptures.

- “Scientists... restful alertness” refer to the TM devotees who came up with that terminology based on their own observations of meditators.

Questionable assertions made during TM marketing and instruction

- Their pseudo-scientific dogma holds that stress accumulates in the body and that it may be removed through the purification of regular TM practice

Illustration from “The TM Book”

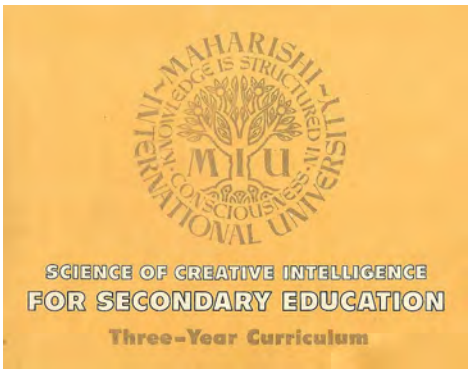
- Claims that their pseudo-scientific model of a “field of consciousness” relates to unified field theory or quantum physics are often made, but are completely unsubstantiated

Another often repeated assertion is that stress can be likened to a substance that somehow accumulates in the body, and that TM practice is a process of purification that removes this accumulated stress. This is not a claim supported by generally accepted scientific evidence.

From *Strength in Stillness,* page 106, describing the contents of Day 3 of TM instruction during which some of this pseudo-scientific dogma is delivered to new meditators: “Understand the mechanics of how the unique state of restful alertness gained during TM practice allows the body to dissolve deeply rooted stress.”

Questionable assertions made during TM marketing and instruction

- All of these points, all parts of the so-called “Science of Creative Intelligence” (SCI), are allegedly supported by both meditators' experience and (dubious) scientific and medical research
- SCI is the foundational theory or dogma of TM and is inseparable from it, based on Hindu/Vedic concepts as interpreted by Maharishi



These concepts are taught in detail in an advanced part of the program, the “Science of Creative Intelligence” or SCI course. SCI is the foundational theoretical aspect of TM and is inseparable from it; it maintains that these assertions may be verified through both individual experiences and scientific research, including the allegedly observed social effects of group practice of TM techniques. SCI is based on Maharishi’s interpretation of Vedantic Hinduism.

“The Transcendental Meditation technique is the practical aspect of the Science of Creative Intelligence,” according to this TM organization website. Doctrinal tenets of SCI of a religious nature are present throughout TM promotion, preparation and instruction. For a detailed discussion, see my article, “You can't spell TM without SCI.”

“The Foundations of Maharishi's Science of Creative Intelligence: An Introduction.” Journal of Maharishi Vedic Research Institute.

What Transcendental Meditation is, today

- TM is endorsed and promoted by the famous and influential, including Oprah Winfrey, Ellen DeGeneres, Katy Perry, Jerry Seinfeld, Tom Hanks and Michael J. Fox, as well as the living Beatles

Oprah, Ellen, and the current leader of the TM movement, Maharaja (great king) Adhiraj Rajaraam (Tony Nader)

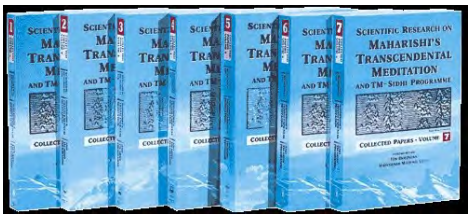
- A cultural phenomenon, a major influence on culture, music, language in the West – words like “mantra” as well as the general popularity of meditation in various forms, and yoga

Today frequent references to Transcendental Meditation may be found in the media and online, with endorsements from many famous, influential and wealthy people, a feature which has been true of Maharishi’s movement since before he left India. It’s been a cultural phenomenon in the West for more than a half century, a major influence on culture, music and language. It’s one of the precursors of the popularity of yoga, meditation, and many things of Indian origin today.

Photo montage from the blog post, “No girls allowed in the treehouse! Oprah, Ellen, and Transcendental Meditation”

What Transcendental Meditation is, today

- Manufactured façade of scientific, medical, and academic legitimacy, with “hundreds” of published papers allegedly supporting their marketing claims



- David Lynch's foundation has been working in recent years to provide TM to vulnerable populations, including urban youth and veterans with PTSD, seeking direct government support
- How did they get here?

David Lynch, the film director, started his David Lynch Foundation to provide TM to vulnerable, “at-risk” populations, including veterans with PTSD and urban public school students, seeking direct government and institutional support for those programs. Integral to that effort is a manufactured façade of scientific, medical and academic legitimacy, with “hundreds” of published studies. These were generally performed with the participation of, and under the influence of, lifelong meditators, supporting their claims of many benefits to individuals and society.

The full name of Lynch's foundation is “David Lynch Foundation for Consciousness-Based Education and World Peace.” Both of these targets of advocacy are part of the TM movement's insistence that its practice provides a “solution to all problems:” here, classroom stress and education, and as if by magic, global transformation through group practice of TM techniques including “yogic flying,” as stated on the initial version of Lynch's website (and since removed): “groups of trained meditation experts … engaged to radiate a measurable influence of calm and coherence throughout society.”

David Lynch Foundation initial website via archive.org (2005)
The Maharishi Effect (Wikipedia article)

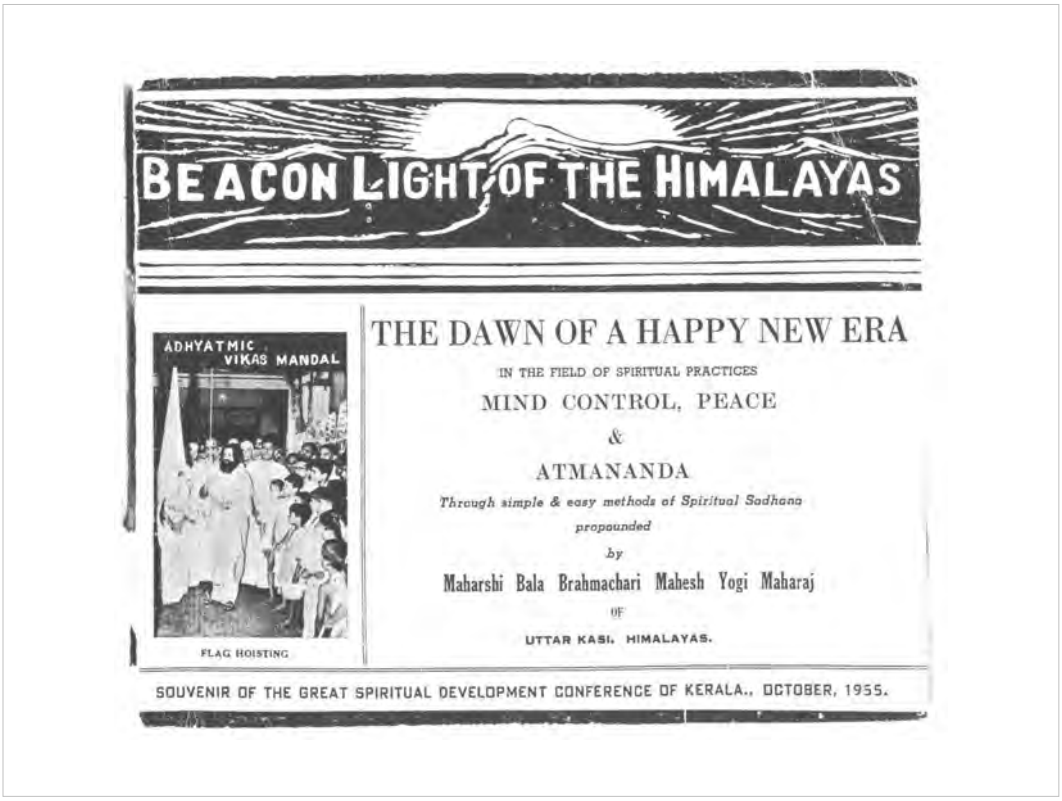
Photo of Lynch by Georges Biard, CC BY-SA 3.0,
https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=59768294

A brief history of

Transcendental Meditation

(1955 through today)

To understand, and better construct, a counter-marketing effort around TM, I think it's important to ask, how did they get here?



BEACON LIGHT OF THE HIMALAYAS

ADHYATMIC VIKAS MANDAL

FLAG HOISTING

THE DAWN OF A HAPPY NEW ERA

IN THE FIELD OF SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

MIND CONTROL, PEACE

&

ATMANANDA

Through simple & easy methods of Spiritual Sadhana

propounded

by

Maharshi Bala Brahmachari Mahesh Yogi Maharaj

OF

UTTAR KASI, HIMALAYAS.

SOUVENIR OF THE GREAT SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE OF KERALA., OCTOBER, 1955.

The origin of the TM movement and organization as we know it today can be traced to what might be called Maharishi's coming-out party, a "spiritual development conference" held in Kerala, India, in 1955. This souvenir booklet, "Beacon Light of the Himalayas," referring to Maharishi and his teachings, contains many of the elements that we often see in TM marketing efforts today, along with some that have been purged out over the years. The conference attracted several religious, political, business, and other prominent figures of the time in India, and their participation and endorsements are prominent in this booklet. Also clear in these first two pages are the claims of both individual and social benefit in what was then called "spiritual practices" including "mind control," which was then used more often than "meditation" to describe the practice.

Beacon Light of the Himalayas, full text

JAI SHRI GURUDEVA

SOUVENIR

of

The great spiritual Development Conference held at Cochin under the name of

Kerala Maha Sammelan

of

Shri Sankaracharya Brahmananda Saraswathi Adhyatmic Vikas Mandal

Dedicated to

Maharshi Bala Brahmachari Mahesh Yogi Maharaj

of

UTTARKASHI, HIMALAYAS

by

HIS DEVOTEES OF KERALA

For whom He has kindly opened the gates of Spiritual Glory in material life
and on whom He has graciously conferred
MIND CONTROL, PEACE in daily life
and experience of ATMANANDA with benefits of a material nature also
within a few weeks of Sadhana through easy methods of devotion to the Almighty.

What's since been removed, or moved to the realm of a less public inner doctrine, are the spiritual and religious descriptions of the technique and of Maharishi's teachings. Reference is made to methods of "spiritual sadhana" (a daily spiritual practice) and "easy methods of devotion to the Almighty." One essay in the booklet is titled "World Peace and Individual Happiness," illustrating that Maharishi has ascribed these results to TM since this beginning.

World Peace & Individual Happiness

by

K. Venkataraghavan

From the beginning of human history everyone has striven for happiness and Peace. Men in the mass, and in isolation, are chasing it all the time on inspired ideas or those of their own invention, but only a few have had any real and lasting happiness. For many, the small happiness of the senses is off-set by great mental anxiety and suffering.

the agency to secure it all, is a material outlook, backed by a scientific approach socalled. The endeavour at administrative levels, is only to assure certain pleasures to all men in the mass at some pretentious uniformity. But uniformity is not the plan of Nature, or Evolution so-called-a fact which even the most dilettanti-pragmatist can hardly afford to ignore. It is incredible therefore that any effort at stander

A brief history of TM

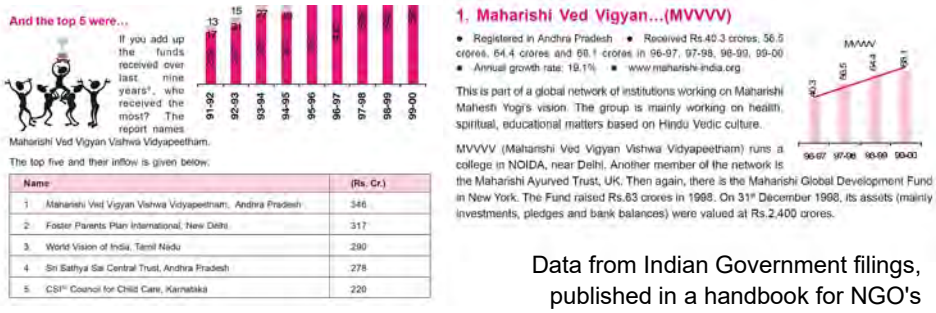
- Maharishi is the product of a religious revival in India around the time of independence
- He sought to create and sustain his own sect as part of that ongoing revival
- Obtaining status and influence in the West eventually proved financially lucrative, reversing colonial capital flows

The context of this conference, and Maharishi's rise to prominence, is a religious revival in India dating to the early to mid-20th century, concurrent with Indian independence. In the course of those developments, he sought to create and sustain his own sect, an offshoot of one of the four monasteries of one school of Hindu philosophy. By improvising a method by which he obtained status and influence in Western society, he successfully created a financially lucrative means of reversing colonial capital flows. While estimates of the TM movement's total wealth vary, many value it in the billions of dollars, but it is difficult to determine its true worth.

Since 1976, non-governmental organizations in India have been required to report the receipt of foreign funds. During the 1990s, the TM movement in India, by way of its Hindu school system, was the largest NGO recipient of these contributions in India, exceeding that of all other well-known charities such as World Vision. These funds totaled almost one hundred million dollars during that decade.

A brief history of TM

- At least, hundreds of millions of US$ have been transferred to the Maharishi-branded Hindu school system. It was the largest Indian NGO recipient of foreign funds, between 1991 and 2000.



And the top 5 were...

If you add up the funds received over last nine years[3], who received the most? The report names Maharishi Ved Vigyan Vishwa Vidyapeetham.

The top five and their inflow is given below:

	Name	(Rs. Cr.)
1	Maharishi Ved Vigyan Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Andhra Pradesh	346
2	Foster Parents Plan International, New Delhi	317
3	World Vision of India, Tamil Nadu	290
4	Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, Andhra Pradesh	278
5	CSI[10] Council for Child Care, Karnataka	220

1. Maharishi Ved Vigyan...(MVVVV)

- Registered in Andhra Pradesh
- Received Rs.40.3 crores, 56.5 crores, 64.4 crores and 68.1 crores in 96-97, 97-98, 98-99, 99-00
- Annual growth rate: 19.1%
- www.maharishi-india.org

This is part of a global network of institutions working on Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's vision. The group is mainly working on health, spiritual, educational matters based on Hindu Vedic culture.

MVVVV (Maharishi Ved Vigyan Vishwa Vidyapeetham) runs a college in NOIDA, near Delhi. Another member of the network is the Maharishi Ayurved Trust, UK. Then again, there is the Maharishi Global Development Fund in New York. The Fund raised Rs.63 crores in 1998. On 31st December 1998, its assets (mainly investments, pledges and bank balances) were valued at Rs.2,400 crores.

Data from Indian Government filings, published in a handbook for NGO's

Source: AccountAid India AccountAble Handbook FCRA, 2002, pages 7 and 44. Link to source.

Adjusting for varying exchange rates for each year and extrapolating backward from these specific numbers, I've estimated that about 98 million USD were transferred to India between 1991 and 2000.

Cash inflows from Europe and the USA to Maharishi organization nonprofit entities in India between 2007 and 2019, reported to the Indian government, totaled another 96 million USD. These quarterly filings can be found through the India Ministry of Home Affairs FCRA Online Services website.

Foreign Contribution Regulation Act at Wikipedia

A brief history of TM

Initially considered illegitimate by many in his own country, Maharishi allegedly received a state funeral (2008) and recently was honored by the government with a postal stamp

The Maharishi, meditation master to the West, cremated in India

By GAVIN RABINOWITZ, Associated Press - 2008/02/11

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the iconic Indian guru who sought to blend Eastern spirituality and Western science to harness the mind's power and heal the world, was cremated Monday in a tumultuous ceremony at one of Hinduism's holiest sites.

Perhaps befitting this son of India who spent more than five decades establishing a meditation empire in the West with dozens of celebrity followers, the funeral was a mix of ancient Vedic tradition, modern Indian chaos and a touch of Hollywood-style theatrics.

...

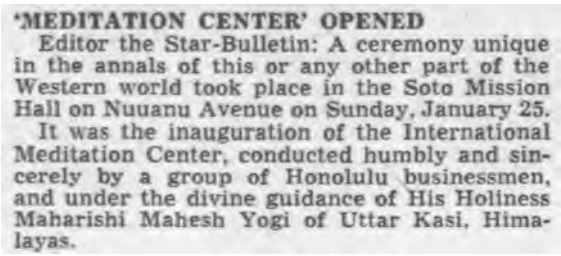
About 2,000 followers from around the world came for the funeral but only men were allowed to attend the ceremony. Women watched a televised version from the ashram.

"He was such a great teacher. He opened the fullness of life to me. He allowed me to experience the eternity and infinity within myself," said Royal Lillge, 58, from Boise in the U.S. state of Idaho. He has been a TM teacher since 1970.

Also attending were Indian meditation guru Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and Hollywood film director David Lynch.

A brief history of TM

- A popular misimpression is that TM was the domain of 1960's hippies – actually TM in the West was supported by business and wealthy influential people from the beginning – first TM center in the US was the work of “a group of Honolulu businessmen,” 1959



'MEDITATION CENTER' OPENED

Editor the Star-Bulletin: A ceremony unique in the annals of this or any other part of the Western world took place in the Soto Mission Hall on Nuuanu Avenue on Sunday, January 25.

It was the inauguration of the International Meditation Center, conducted humbly and sincerely by a group of Honolulu businessmen, and under the divine guidance of His Holiness Maharishi Mahesh Yogi of Uttar Kasi, Himalayas.

Honolulu Star-Bulletin, February 2, 1959

Helena Olson, writing in her memoir about having Maharishi as a house guest in Los Angeles, “Hermit in the House,” describing the people who arrived each morning for TM instruction in the summer of 1959:

“Business men with cancelled appointments, doctors, laborers risking being late to work, housewives and white-collar men and women were among those who swarmed to '433' [her home] almost as though they had been called. All were asked not to eat breakfast, to bring offerings of fruit and flowers, a white handkerchief, and a monetary gift.”

A brief history of TM

- Ashram in Rishikesh (now known as the Beatles' Ashram) was completed with a contribution of US$100,000 (over a million in today's $) from tobacco heiress Doris Duke – early 1960's

1969 … today, in ruins

Excerpt from "Beyond Gurus" by Nancy Cooke de Herrera, page 136.

Soon our enchanted time at Arrowhead was over, and all of us returned to Los Angeles. One afternoon Doris invited Maharishi for tea. Afterwards, his reaction to the visit amused me.

"Nancy, that house has very sad vibrations. You should tell Doris to get rid of all that old furniture which carries tragedy with it. Have her buy new antiques." It must have been that door of inlaid human bone that got to him.

Then, to our tremendous joy and surprise, Doris gave $100,000 to the S.R.M., asking that it be kept secret. Charlie and Maharishi were overwhelmed. It was such a generous gift. With it, the S.R.M. was able to complete the International Academy of Meditation in Rishikesh. There was even enough money left over to build a house for Maharishi at the ashram, with a special altar to Guru Dev in his *puja* room downstairs.

Unfortunately, word of the gift passed from mouth to mouth, all the way to India. When Doris next visited Bombay, she called on Sharma, my first teacher. He asked her about a gift for him such as she had given Maharishi. Angry that her wishes had not been adhered to, she ended all association with the S.R.M. and with transcendental meditation.

It was such a shame; she never knew how much her wonderful gift had accomplished.

A brief history of TM

- Two pronged approach – recruiting famous or potentially famous individuals, including religious figures, while establishing a presence in academia

Brochure of transcript of BBC interview with the Abbott of Downside, printed by the TM organization, 1964. TM doctrine maintains that its model of human consciousness describes the source of everything, including all other religions

Excerpt from the interview.

Kee How important has the life of Christ Himself been to you in your teachings?

Maharishi I loved His teaching: "the Kingdom of Heaven is within you", and then what you have to do is—"first ye seek the Kingdom of Heaven then all else will be added unto thee."

Kee Yes, but you say, in your writings and in your speeches, that man shouldn't suffer, whereas Christ, as it were, the whole point about him was that He suffered, wasn't it?

Maharishi No, no, no. Christ never suffered. Man, with his suffering vision saw that He was suffering.

Kee Abbot, could you comment on that.

Maharishi We see something with red spectacles and then we say everything red, everything red. So man, from his suffering level, saw that His Saviour was suffering, but Christ in Himself never suffered. His message was of bliss.

Abbot I think we've reached a point here at which there is a difference between the two traditions. After all, in our own sacred books and the Gospels, we are told that Christ, on the eve of His crucifixion, prayed to His Heavenly Father that He—we were told that He was "sorry unto death", and that He prayed to His Heavenly Father, "Lord, if it be possible, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Now, I think that that is an indication—we take it certainly as an indication—that He really did suffer, but that He chose to suffer.

During his first trip to the United States, in 1959, Maharishi was the house guest of a Boston University professor.

Boston Globe

October 12, 1959

Sponsored by B.U. Professor

Yogi Here With Meditation Plea

Residents along Orchard st., Belmont, have witnessed some unaccustomed activity recently centered around the home of Boston University journalism Prof. David Manning White.

Perhaps they have noticed an unusual number of automobiles parked in front of No. 46, with visitors coming and going at all hours of the day.

Or perhaps the youngsters playing touch football along the quiet tree-shaded street ave caught a glimpse through a window of a full-bearded man in flowing white robes seated cross-legged in a position of contemplation.

The callers include prominent scientists, noctors, psychiatrists and men of letters in the area and the man they have come to see is Maharshi Mahesh Yogi, one of India's most famous wise men.

What brings the holy man almost 12,000 miles from his home, high in the Himalayas? And why is he spending a week with the professor of journalism?

* * *

Prof. White met the Yogi in Rangoon last year when he, White, was an adviser to Burma's Premier Nu. A student of comparative religion, as well as of journalism, White spent many hours listening to the wise man expound his philosophy.

SPREADING A WORD—Maharshi Mahesh Yogi and Prof. David Manning White.

perception," says the Yogi. "Meditation has infinite values because it connects the finite with the infinite."

* * *

"It is the opinion of medical men the world over," he said,

concentrated and settled its power is great.

"If previously 100 thoughts came into the mind in one hour, and now, after beginning the practice of meditation, only 10 thoughts come in an hour, then, obviously, each thought has the power of 10 previous thoughts. This is how thought force increases through meditation.

All too often, the Yogi declares, the mind and the soul have not kept pace with material progress and it is in this sphere that he feels his movement can bring happiness to many.

* * *

In the few months since he left India he has seen "Meditation Centers" founded in Honolulu, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Branches also were started in several Far Eastern countries.

After the Yogi leaves the United States he will visit Europe. He hopes to set up an international congress of his movement in Switzerland.

When he returns to India, he will devote his time to teaching his disciples.

Although Prof. White feels he does not have enough experience to teach "meditation," he firmly believes in its power. The Yogi, he says, is a wonderful, wise man who has helped me, and will, I hope, help many, many others, too."

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The strategy that was hinted at in the “Beacon Light” pamphlet was two-pronged: court the famous and wealthy, including religious figures, while establishing legitimacy through various means. These methods continued as Maharishi traveled the world and made frequent tours in the United States.

He created a presence on college campuses, focusing on the most prestigious institutions. During his first trip to the United States, in 1959, Maharishi was the house guest of a Boston University professor.

David Manning White (pictured with Maharishi) at The Art and Popular Culture Encyclopedia

A brief history of TM

- Successive waves of TM interest, first in 1967-69 created a cohort of young people who became TM teachers
- Maharishi's lectures at Harvard in 1966 and 1968, the latter attended by thousands, included movie star Mia Farrow

The first wave of TM popularity, starting in 1967, created interest in TM from many young people, some of whom would soon become TM teachers. Maharishi's personal appearances on college campuses across the United States attracted crowds of students and faculty.

After visiting New York, Maharishi delivered a lecture at the Harvard Law Forum to an audience of about two thousand in January 1968. Present in the audience was the 22-year-old actress, Mia Farrow, who had been initiated into TM just a few hours before. As with many who started TM or joined other similar movements, she was experiencing some personal turmoil, as she was in the middle of a breakup from her then husband, Frank Sinatra. Her younger sister, Prudence, who'd later be the subject of the song, "Dear Prudence," introduced her to TM. Prudence had learned TM two years before, at UCLA.

"Transcendental Meditation Is Key To World Peace, Says Maharishi" – The Harvard Crimson, January 24, 1968

Report of a previous visit to Harvard, November 30, 1966

Maharishi at Harvard Law Forum, January 22, 1968

Mia Farrow in audience

(top right)

The Philadelphia Daily News tabloid ran a similar photo on its front page. “Troubled Mia Finds Spiritual Solace”.

Tomorrow's Weather
CHANCE OF SNOW
Details on Page 3

PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS

8 ★★★★ ★★★★

TEN CENTS

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 1968

FINAL

U.S. Spy Ship With 83 Boarded, Forced Into North Korean Port

— Story on Page 2 —

Dogsleds, Copters Hunt H-Bombs Lost in Air Crash

— Story on Page 2 —

Astrology: Leaders Passing From World Stage
Page 22

Sexpot Facade Masks Real Jane Fonda
Page 35

Troubled Mia Finds Spiritual Solace

Actress Mia Farrow (arrow and closeup), wife of actor-singer Frank Sinatra, pays rapt attention as Maharishi Mahesh Yogi speaks at Harvard University's Sanders theater in Cambridge, Mass. In private meeting, she made plans to follow him today on spiritual trek to India's Himalayas.

Race Squad Vote Creates Furor At School Meet

— Story on Page 3 —

Mia Farrow and Maharishi, at New York Kennedy Airport before their departure for India, with a reporter, January 24, 1968

Following that lecture, Farrow accompanied Maharishi to India, to join a TM teacher training course. This photo, taken at Kennedy Airport just before their departure, sums up all the elements: the starlet, the yogi and the reporter covering a story that was all over the newspapers of the time.

Original photo caption.

NXP 1580219 PREMIUM SERVICE

MIA AND THE MYSTIC

NEW YORK: WEARING A FUR HOOD AND BLACK COAT, ACTRESS MIA FARROW CHATS WITH MAHARISHI MAHESH YOGI, THE MEDITATING MYSTIC FROM INDIA, AND AN UNIDENTIFIED NEWSMAN, BEFORE BOARDING A PLANE AT KENNEDY AIRPORT FOR NEW DELHI. MISS FARROW, WIFE OF FRANK SINATRA, WILL MEDITATE WITH THE GURU IN INDIA.

CREDIT (UPI PHOTO) 1/24/68 SR

SECTION TWO

The Weirton Daily Times

SECTION TWO

VOL. 40, NO. 180 — WEIRTON, WEST VIRGINIA, TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 1968 — Page 9

Synchronized Traffic Lights For Main Street Proposed

Cost Of City Plan Set At $15,000

Stop Sign Plan Rejected

Council Retains Orchard St. Lights

False Arrest Suit Settled

YOUR BANK OF FRIENDLY SERVICE

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FIRST NATIONAL BANK of Weirton

MEMBER F.D.I.C.

Mia Farrow and Maharishi moments before her TM initiation, January 1968.
This story and/or photo ran almost 600 times across North America.
Weirton, West Virginia at the time was a town of 27,000 people.

Various versions of this story, often with this or similar photos, appeared in newspapers large and small. There would be over 600 mentions of Farrow and Maharishi in North American newspapers over the following month.

Photo caption, which garbles Maharishi's Hindu origin a bit:

YOGI VISITS U. S. -- Mia Farrow, wife of entertainer Frank Sinatra, greeted Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, on his arrival yesterday at his hotel in Cambridge, Mass. Later the spiritual leader lectured at Harvard Law School Forum on "Transcendental Meditation." The spiritual guru to the Beatles and of other believers in the benefits of meditation, heads the Hindu Order of Shankarachary. The young actress reportedly made plans with the guru to follow him on a spiritual tour that will end in India's high Himalayas. (UPI TELEPHOTO)

Front page of The Boston Globe, January 23, 1968:

- Bomber crash at Greenland with loss of nuclear weapons
- Vietnam war incident involving Cambodia
- Moon rocket tested; men would walk on the Moon in a year and a half
- Oil slick in Boston harbor
- Maharishi at Harvard

The Boston Globe
MORNING EDITION

Volpe Budget Passes Billion

Four H-Bombs Lost

B-52 Crashes in Greenland, Bay Stater Dies

Governor Sees Rte. 495 Boom

U.S. Admits Cambodia Incident

Moon Ship Orbits, Fails, Then Works

HUD Helping Landlords, Says Atkins

STOCKS DROP SHARPLY

Paris Offers Turn to '30's And Nudity

Supreme Court Upholds Required Teacher Oaths

Probers Try to Fix Blame for Oil Slick

What Is It?

This front page of the Boston Globe during that week sums up the zeitgeist of the time. Stories of war, environmental harm, and nuclear hazard share the page with Maharishi and a test of a rocket to the moon. Men would walk on the moon just a year and a half later. It was in the context of great scientific and technological advancement, and the nearly impossible seemingly becoming reality, that Maharishi delivered his message: that all the world's problems, still unaddressed by scientific progress, could be solved if only enough people simply closed their eyes and thought the right thoughts. .

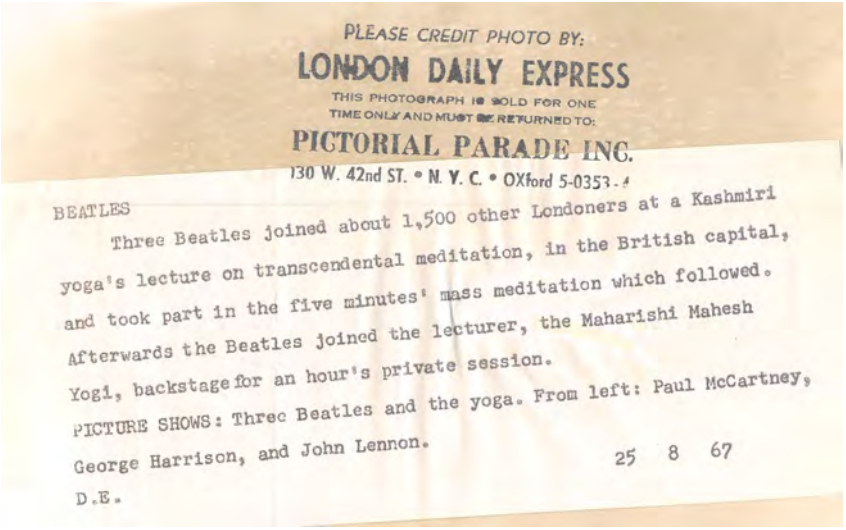
Maharishi would eventually describe his meditation as a "technology," while those who were vulnerable to his offer of an easy fix for every problem, from the personal to the global, would see to it that his name and his meditation became commonly known.

Three of the Beatles (Paul McCartney, George Harrison, John Lennon) meeting Maharishi for the first time in London, August 25, 1967, following a lecture attended by 1500 people.

Maharishi's worldwide recognition would likely have been considerably diminished, if it weren't for these guys, the Beatles, three of them pictured at their first meeting with the yogi in August 1967. Just a few days later, their manager, Brian Epstein, would be found dead of a drug overdose. Maharishi stepped into that vacuum. "Maharishi was their leader now," as Jenny Boyd, Beatle George Harrison's sister-in-law, has written. .

The Beatles meet Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

"Jenny Boyd Sheds Light On The Beatles' Relationship With The Maharishi In New Book," Cosmic Magazine, quoting from Jennifer Juniper: A Journey Beyond the Muse



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BEATLES

Three Beatles joined about 1,500 other Londoners at a Kashmiri yoga's lecture on transcendental meditation, in the British capital, and took part in the five minutes' mass meditation which followed. Afterwards the Beatles joined the lecturer, the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, backstage for an hour's private session.

PICTURE SHOWS: Three Beatles and the yoga. From left: Paul McCartney, George Harrison, and John Lennon.

25 8 67

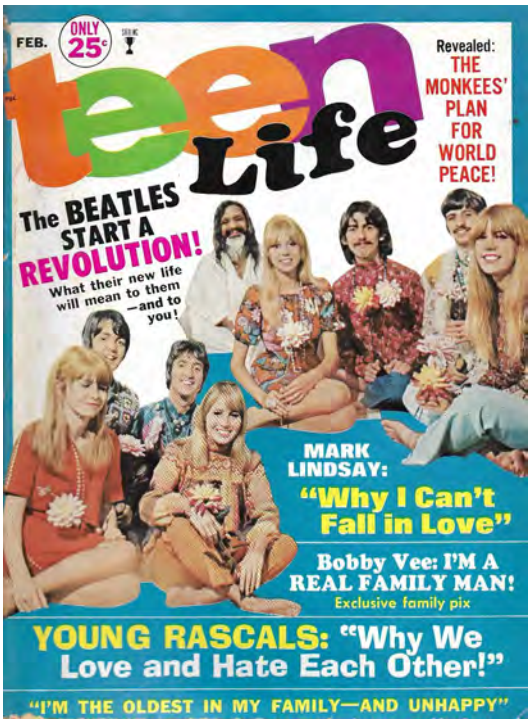
D.E.

They would follow Mia Farrow to India, where they wrote more than thirty songs. While the Beatles would split with Maharishi in a few short months, the impact of that association would generate a great deal of popular interest in Transcendental Meditation, and with Indian spirituality.

Photo © Paul Saltzman, 1968

Gallery

Teen Life,
February 1968



Maharishi coincidentally found himself in the right place at the right time, to exploit the vulnerabilities of some prominent individuals who were going through painful transitions in their lives. He offered them a product that perfectly matched the perceived needs and expectations of millions of people. That moment is reflected today in the demographics of many of the most ardent promoters of TM, who came of age around that time, and who today wear the number of decades they've been meditating as some sort of badge of honor.

DESERET NEWS, Friday, June 23, 1967 D3

What's With Beach Boys?

By BRYAN GRAY
Young Americans Staff

Several letters have been coming in recently with questions for the Disc 'N Dat mailbag.

Mont South, a teenager from Malad, Idaho, wants to know why the Beach Boys haven't made an album or a single record since last November.

Well, one thing for sure; it isn't because of declining popularity. Their last single, "Good Vibrations" was the number one song in England and the United States.

Herb Heldt, the man with Capitol Records in this area, said their new album entitled "Smile" was to be released late last year.

But Brian Wilson is not yet satisfied with the songs. And the album won't be released until Brian gives his okay.

The Beach Boys with Maharishi, May 1968
Photo from my personal collection

Next to nothing was recorded in newspapers of the time, that chronicled the internal turmoil of the band in 1966 and 1967, other than, as in this example, the obvious delay in release of the *Smile* album. A summary of what actually happened during those years, extracted from later reporting and memoirs, can be found in the Wikipedia article on the recording sessions.

Most of the group was initiated into TM on December 17, 1967. Mike Love and Al Jardine would later become TM teachers, at a 1971 Mallorca TM teacher training course. Love was also present at the aforementioned Harvard lecture.

Wikipedia article section

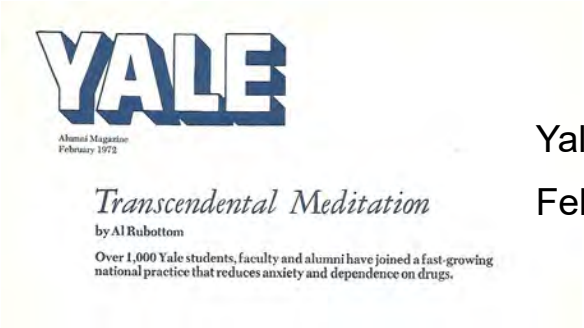
David Beard's interview with Mike Love and Al Jardine

Brian Wilson, Mike Love, and the Psychodrama Behind the Beach Boys' Sun-Streaked Legacy at Vanity Fair, written by meditator James Wolcott

Albert Poland on the Beach Boys' failed 1968 tour with Maharishi

A brief history of TM, 1960's-70's

- TM SCI course offered for credit at prominent universities including Harvard, Stanford, UCLA, others, 1971
- Thousands of students and faculty learning TM at universities and colleges, including, allegedly, 1000 at Yale


YALE

Alumni Magazine
February 1972

Transcendental Meditation

by Al Rubottom

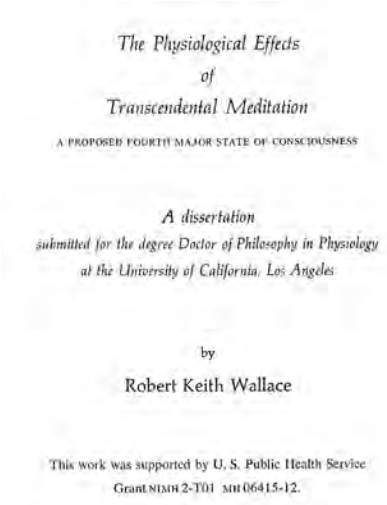
Over 1,000 Yale students, faculty and alumni have joined a fast-growing national practice that reduces anxiety and dependence on drugs.

Yale Alumni Magazine, February 1972

By 1971 for-credit courses in the Science of Creative Intelligence would be offered at Harvard, Stanford, UCLA and allegedly fifty other colleges. Thousands of students and faculty members learned TM.

A brief history of TM, 1960's-70's

- Continued “scientification” of TM starting around 1970, shifted emphasis from spirituality to scientific research to legitimize claims of benefits
- Scientific and medical research involved TM devotees as investigators, likely often trained as TM teachers


The Physiological Effects
of
Transcendental Meditation

A PROPOSED FOURTH MAJOR STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

A dissertation
submitted for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Physiology
at the University of California, Los Angeles

by

Robert Keith Wallace

This work was supported by U. S. Public Health Service
Grant NIMH 2-T01 MH 06415-12.

Meditator Robert Keith Wallace's dissertation, 1970

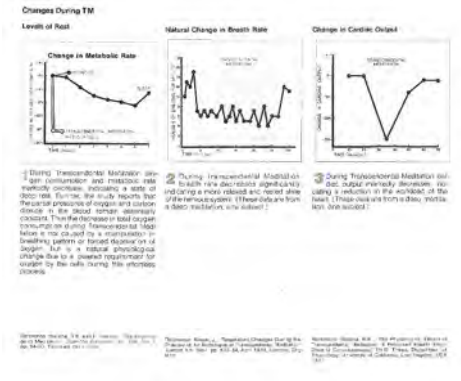
The movement shifted its emphasis from “spiritual regeneration” to promotion of an allegedly scientific basis for the benefits of TM, supported by research performed with the participation of a small group of loyal meditators as investigators, who themselves often first learned of TM and its ideological basis at these same universities.

Robert Keith Wallace, whose dissertation was one of the first papers used to promote TM, did that work at UCLA, was later a researcher at Harvard, and he started TM in 1964, at the age of 18.

Original full text of Wallace’s dissertation

A brief history of TM, 1960's-70's

- TM advertising, brochures, pamphlets put forward their research findings, usually with a series of small graphs, giving the false impression of a general scientific consensus supporting TM claims



From TM booklet “Fundamentals of Progress” (1975). Third graph is from the thesis on the previous slide

By the mid-1970’s, the promotion of TM usually included reference to a series of small graphs referencing various scientific studies, as in this example, here including Wallace’s study in the third graph.

Fundamentals of Progress booklet

A brief history of TM, 1960's-70's

- 17 TM teachers in 1967, grew to 2,555 in 1972; centers opened in cities and towns across North America

Centers

There are 350 World Plan Centers in the United States offering courses in the Science of Creative Intelligence and the Transcendental Meditation program

Atlanta
3615 North Stratford Road N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30342
phone 404 231-1093
Berkeley
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Berkeley, Calif. 94705
phone 415 548-1144
Boston
73 Newbury Street
Boston, Mass. 02116
phone 617 268-3770
Cambridge
33 Garden Street
Cambridge, Mass. 02138
phone 617 876-4581
Charlotte
1224 East Seventh Street
Charlotte, N.C. 28204
phone 704 332-6694
Chicago
604 Davis Street
Evanston, Ill. 60201
phone 312 864-1810
Cincinnati
3960 Winding Way
Cincinnati, Ohio 45229
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Columbus
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Columbus, Ohio 43221
phone 614 481-8877
Denver
240 St. Paul
Suite 102
Denver, Colorado 80206
phone 303 320-4007
Des Moines
1911 34th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50311
phone 515 255-1547
Detroit
Colonial Federal Building
63 Kercheval Suite 204
Grosse Point, Mich. 48236
phone 313 885-5580
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Hartford, Conn. 06106
phone 203 247-5733
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phone 808 533-2335
Houston
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phone 713 627-7500
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Kansas City, Mo. 64113
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Seattle, Wash. 98111
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Washington, D.C.
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Washington, D.C. 20008
phone 202 387-5050

Local Center

1973 TM brochure back page

A core group of just 17 TM teachers in 1967 grew to over 2500 by 1972, TM centers were opening across North America.

A brief history of TM, 1960's-70's

- Maharishi International University – name first used to refer to the 1972 Spain and Italy TM teacher and SCI courses – headquartered in a California apartment complex in 1973
- MIU moves to Fairfield, Iowa in 1974, eventually obtains accreditation in 1980

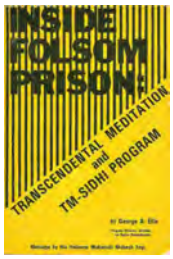
- Physical isolation of a separatist devotee community
- Provides a veneer of academic/scientific legitimacy for Maharishi's “Vedic Science” teachings

By then the movement had founded its own university - Maharishi International University, or MIU - with the twenty-seven-year-old Wallace as its first president. Founded in a Spanish hotel and then housed in a California apartment complex, it moved to a vacant Fairfield, Iowa college campus in 1974. Though not explicitly disclosed, I believe that MIU’s primary purpose is to legitimize and promote Transcendental Meditation and SCI, and what’s now known as “Maharishi Vedic Science,” the continuing effort to repackage Vedic, or Hindu, scriptures and practices as a “science.”

MIU catalogue 1974-75

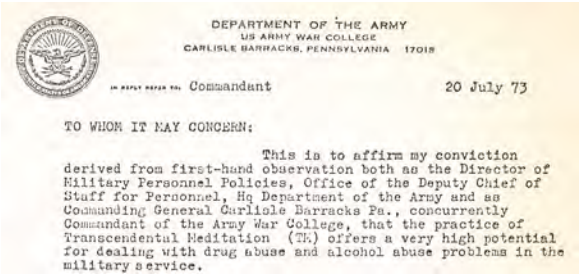
A brief history of TM, 1960's-70's

- Growing initiatives to insinuate TM into US public schools, prisons, military



Book promoting the use of TM in prisons, 1979

TM movement circulated endorsement letter by Major General Franklin Davis, US Army, 1973. He was also a trustee and faculty member of MIU.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
US ARMY WAR COLLEGE
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

IN REPLY REFER TO: Commandant

20 July 73

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to affirm my conviction derived from first-hand observation both as the Director of Military Personnel Policies, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Hq Department of the Army and as Commanding General Carlisle Barracks Pa., concurrently Commandant of the Army War College, that the practice of Transcendental Meditation (TM) offers a very high potential for dealing with drug abuse and alcohol abuse problems in the military service.

Throughout the mid-1970's movement leaders sought to insinuate the TM program and SCI into US public schools, the military and prisons. The movement gained many endorsements from political and military leaders.

Inside Folsom Prison at U.S. Department of Justice

Franklin M. Davis Jr. at Wikipedia

A brief history of TM, 1960's-70's

- The “Merv wave” of new meditators, largely generated by Maharishi's appearance on the Merv Griffin show in 1975
- Peak recruitment in 1975, the year of the Merv episode – more than 292,000 initiated

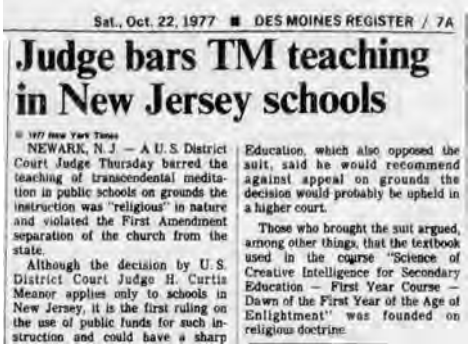
Stills from video of the first time Maharishi was a guest on the Merv Griffin Show, with David Lynch in the front row of the audience, taped at the San Francisco Civic Auditorium in February 1975

1975 was the year of peak recruitment into TM, as a result of Maharishi’s appearance on an episode of the Merv Griffin Show which was televised across the US and Canada during the Spring of 1975.

Maharishi on the Merv Griffin Show,
one, two, three, four
also in 1977, introducing the TM-Sidhi program
which served as my introductory lecture

A brief history of TM, 1960's-70's

- Prominence of TM, successful recruitment of meditators, targeting of public schools and government ultimately resulted in opposition culminating in a Federal court injunction against TM



Sat., Oct. 22, 1977 ■ DES MOINES REGISTER / 7A

Judge bars TM teaching in New Jersey schools

© 1977 New York Times

NEWARK, N. J. — A U. S. District Court Judge Thursday barred the teaching of transcendental meditation in public schools on grounds the instruction was "religious" in nature and violated the First Amendment separation of the church from the state.

Although the decision by U. S. District Court Judge H. Curtis Meanor applies only to schools in New Jersey, it is the first ruling on the use of public funds for such instruction and could have a sharp

Education, which also opposed the suit, said he would recommend against appeal on grounds the decision would probably be upheld in a higher court.

Those who brought the suit argued, among other things, that the textbook used in the course "Science of Creative Intelligence for Secondary Education — First Year Course — Dawn of the First Year of the Age of Enlightment" was founded on religious doctrine.

This explosion of interest in TM, along with Federal funding for a program introducing TM into New Jersey public schools, ultimately resulted in a Federal injunction ejecting TM from public schools, based on its conclusion that TM and SCI were "religious in nature."

Forms of criticism of

Transcendental Meditation

1968 through today

Sources of criticism of TM

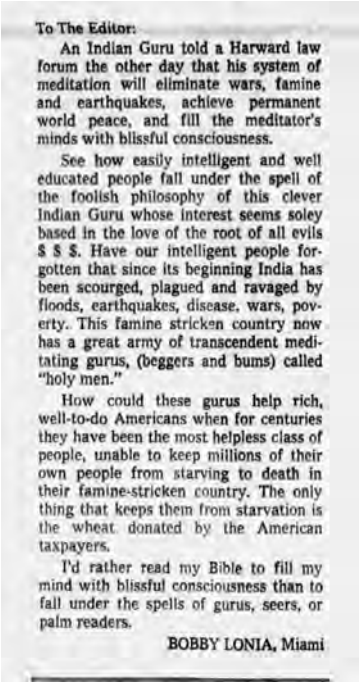
- Cultural supremacist/xenophobic (it's from India)
- Evangelical Christian / Fundamentalist
  - Competition for souls/recruits
  - Potentially harmful in various ways
  - Fears of demon possession
- Civil rights violation, fraud, harm allegations
- Former members
- Scientific/skeptical community, other comments and stories, newspapers and TV

Despite the apparent prominence of TM, there are plenty of reasons to be critical of it, and that criticism comes from several directions which have developed concurrently with the TM movement's growth in North America. There are at least five forms of criticism of Transcendental Meditation, which overlap with each other, and which have varying levels of legitimacy, in my view.

- There's a cultural supremacist, xenophobic view that holds that anything of this nature from India is by definition suspect to worthless.
- The evangelical Christian view holds that TM is an existential threat to Christianity, as a competitor and hindrance to evangelism, and is harmful to individuals, either psychologically, as a "spiritual counterfeit," or even through "demon possession."
- Allegations of civil rights violations on religious freedom grounds along with claims of fraud and harm have made their way into Federal courts.
- Former members have brought lawsuits and challenged the TM organizations by sharing their stories and independently documented the facts about the practice and the organization.
- Scientists and skeptics, along with newspaper columnists, have also brought their weight to bear against TM.

"How could these gurus help rich, well-to-do Americans when for centuries they have been the most helpless class of people, unable to keep millions of their own people from starving to death in their famine-stricken country."

Bobby Lonia, Letter to the Editor, Miami News, February 10, 1968



To The Editor:

An Indian Guru told a Harward law forum the other day that his system of meditation will eliminate wars, famine and earthquakes, achieve permanent world peace, and fill the meditator's minds with blissful consciousness.

See how easily intelligent and well educated people fall under the spell of the foolish philosophy of this clever Indian Guru whose interest seems soley based in the love of the root of all evils $ $ $. Have our intelligent people forgotten that since its beginning India has been scourged, plagued and ravaged by floods, earthquakes, disease, wars, poverty. This famine stricken country now has a great army of transcendent meditating gurus, (beggers and bums) called "holy men."

How could these gurus help rich, well-to-do Americans when for centuries they have been the most helpless class of people, unable to keep millions of their own people from starving to death in their famine-stricken country. The only thing that keeps them from starvation is the wheat donated by the American taxpayers.

I'd rather read my Bible to fill my mind with blissful consciousness than to fall under the spells of gurus, seers, or palm readers.

BOBBY LONIA, Miami

Here's an example of the first, a letter to the editor from 1968 that calls TM a "foolish philosophy" from a place that's "unable to keep millions of their own people from starving to death in their famine-stricken country." This sort of attitude, here made explicit, has at times motivated some of the opposition to TM over the years.

Paul Harvey column, January 1968

"...only 30 per cent attend [church]... Meanwhile, cults are flourishing. This Indian philosopher advocates a system of 'meditation' which leads to 'blissful consciousness.'"

Paul Harvey News

Drift Away From Old Time Religion Leaves Deep Scars

By PAUL HARVEY

"Take one God away from a man and he'll create another."

Man, inescapably aware of his finite inadequacy, must worship something bigger than himself.

Robert Ruark wrote that the white man was responsible for African ferment "because we took away the native's historic tribal rites and failed to replace those with something of value."

Similarly, recently, our Christian churches have so commercialized themselves that many youngsters, disillusioned and confused, are grasping at spiritual straws.

A bearded guru from India has made a tremendous impact on America and England because he appears to fill the void which was left when Christian churches began to "tolerate" everything.

Both membership and attendance in America's mainline churches are lagging behind our population increase.

The Gallup Poll shows that 95 per cent of Americans believe "religion is important." But only 69 per cent belong and only 30 per cent attend!

They know what they need. But they aren't getting it in church!

Meanwhile, cults are flourishing.

This Indian philosopher advocates a system of "meditation" which leads to "blissful consciousness." His system, he says, "also will eliminate wars, famine and earthquakes."

When Mrs. Frank Sinatra (Mia Farrow) flew back to India with him, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi expressed confidence that she will make a "good disciple" and promised to guide her to "higher spiritual experience."

At the same time, Buddhism has twice as many disciples in the United States as it did just two years ago. No "regular church" can claim such a spectacular growth rate.

What's the matter? What happened to diminish the influence of Christianity? Church attendance stagnates, while crime, licentiousness, promiscuity, divorce and social disease pyramid.

Clergymen, disillusioned with the ineffectiveness of the church, rebel — openly or clandestinely.

Some of us who are convinced that God and the devil are at war in our world see Satan winning every battle!

Those who argue that this upheaval constitutes nothing more serious than an accelerated social evolution are refuted by the fact that their liberalism is bearing such bitter fruits: crudeness, rudeness, violence, pornography, rebellion.

Our streets are unsafe even for policemen!

So the drift away from what we used to call "fundamental religion" has not been in any way beneficial.

We can continue on course and destroy the few remaining "absolutes" of the church. We can disregard moral law and discredit civil law.

But when we have done our utmost to make sure "God is dead," He will rise again.

Men, left to their own devices, make such an unholy mess of society and such a despair and disease-wracked wreckage of themselves that eventually, driven to their knees, they resume praying for the very "spiritual guidance" which they sought with such determination to dilute and destroy.

Copyright 1968

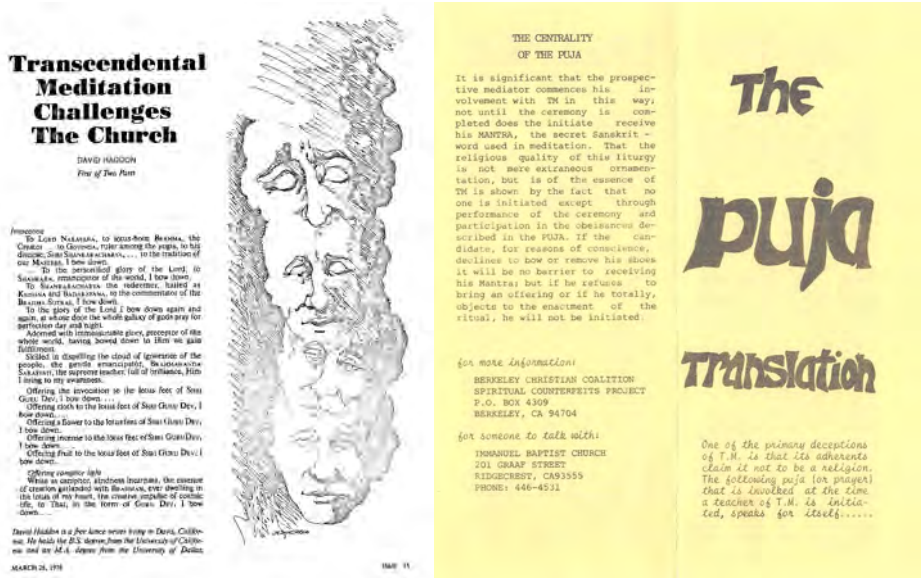
This column by radio commentator Paul Harvey from 1968 was one of the first to be published which attempted to cast TM as a challenge to Christians, as one of the forces presenting an imminent threat to Christianity and Western civilization. Harvey wrote, "Church attendance stagnates, while crime, licentiousness, promiscuity, divorce and social disease pyramid." "Meanwhile, cults are flourishing."

Evangelical Christian criticism of TM

- Berkeley Christian Coalition – Spiritual Counterfeits Project – David Haddon – 1975
- Publishing boom, 1975-80; at least 16 books on the subject of TM, almost all from Christian publishers
- Billy Graham quoted in April 1976
- Assemblies of God statement, August 1976

Christian criticism of TM accelerated in the mid-1970's, in part because of the efforts of former TM teacher David Haddon, one founder of the Berkeley-based Spiritual Counterfeits Project, or SCP, which organized a campaign against the teaching of TM in public schools.

Spiritual Counterfeits Project at Wikipedia



Transcendental Meditation Challenges The Church

DAVID HADDON

First of Two Parts

Invocation

To Lord Narayana, to lotus-born Brahma, the Creator ... to Govinda, ruler among the yogis, to his disciple, Sri Shankaracharya, ... to the tradition of our Masters, I bow down.

To the personified glory of the Lord, to Shankara, emancipator of the world, I bow down.

To Shankaracharya the redeemer, hailed as Krishna and Badarayana, to the commentator of the Brahma Sutras, I bow down.

To the glory of the Lord I bow down again and again, at whose door the whole galaxy of gods pray for perfection day and night.

Adorned with immeasurable glory, preceptor of the whole world, having bowed down to Him we gain fulfillment.

Skilled in dispelling the cloud of ignorance of the people, the gentle emancipator, Bhagavan Sri Sankaraji, the supreme teacher, full of brilliance, Him I bring to my awareness.

Offering the invocation to the lotus feet of Sri Guru Dev, I bow down ...

Offering cloth to the lotus feet of Sri Guru Dev, I bow down ...

Offering a flower to the lotus feet of Sri Guru Dev, I bow down.

Offering incense to the lotus feet of Sri Guru Dev, I bow down.

Offering fruit to the lotus feet of Sri Guru Dev, I bow down.

Offering complete light

Whose as camphor, aimlessness incarnate, the essence of creation garlanded with Brahman, ever dwelling in the lotus of my heart, the creative impulse of cosmic life, to That, in the form of Guru Dev, I bow down.

David Haddon is a free lance writer living in Davis, California. He holds the B.S. degree from the University of California and an M.A. degree from the University of Dallas.

MARCH 26, 1976

THE CENTRALITY OF THE PUJA

It is significant that the prospective mediator commences his involvement with TM in this way; not until the ceremony is completed does the initiate receive his MANTRA, the secret Sanskrit - word used in meditation. That the religious quality of this liturgy is not mere extraneous ornamentation, but is of the essence of TM is shown by the fact that no one is initiated except through performance of the ceremony and participation in the obeisances described in the PUJA. If the candidate, for reasons of conscience, declines to bow or remove his shoes it will be no barrier to receiving his Mantra; but if he refuses to bring an offering or if he totally, objects to the enactment of the ritual, he will not be initiated.

for more information:

BERKELEY CHRISTIAN COALITION
SPIRITUAL COUNTERFEITS PROJECT
P.O. BOX 4309
BERKELEY, CA 94704

for someone to talk with:

IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH
201 GRAAF STREET
RIDGECREST, CA93555
PHONE: 446-4531

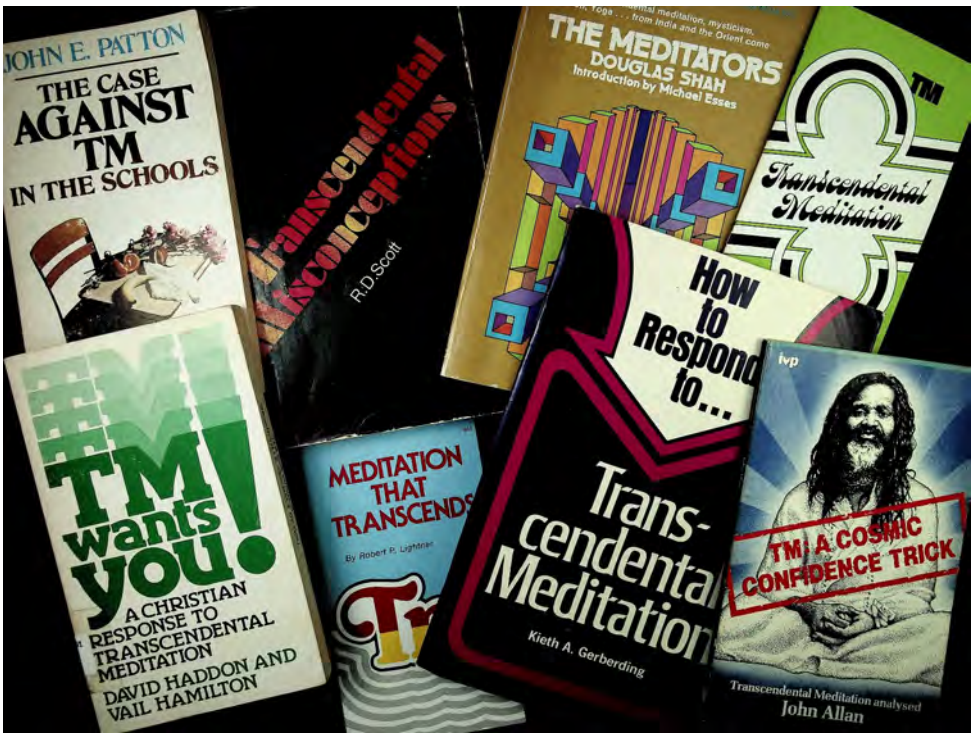
The puja translation

One of the primary deceptions of T.M. is that its adherents claim it not to be a religion. The following puja (or prayer) that is involved at the time a teacher of T.M. is initiated, speaks for itself.....

First of two articles by David Haddon in *Christianity Today*, March 26, 1976
Excerpt of the SCP's *puja* translation one-page pamphlet, undated

Haddon published two articles in Christianity Today, and later, a book and a pamphlet, which, while emphasizing the view that TM was antithetical to, or posed a threat to, Christianity, provided a detailed explanation of the ideology behind TM and the limitations of the scientific research supporting it. The SCP also published the English translation of the puja, which had never before been revealed to anyone other than the TM teachers who received it during their training, as an obvious example of the underlying religious basis of TM.

At about the same time, Christian publishing companies produced at least sixteen books exclusively about Transcendental Meditation between 1976 and 1980.



Books shown:

The Case Against TM in the Schools, John E. Patton

TM Wants You, David Haddon and Vail Hamilton (both formerly TM teachers)

Transcendental Misconceptions by R.D. Scott (also a former TM teacher)

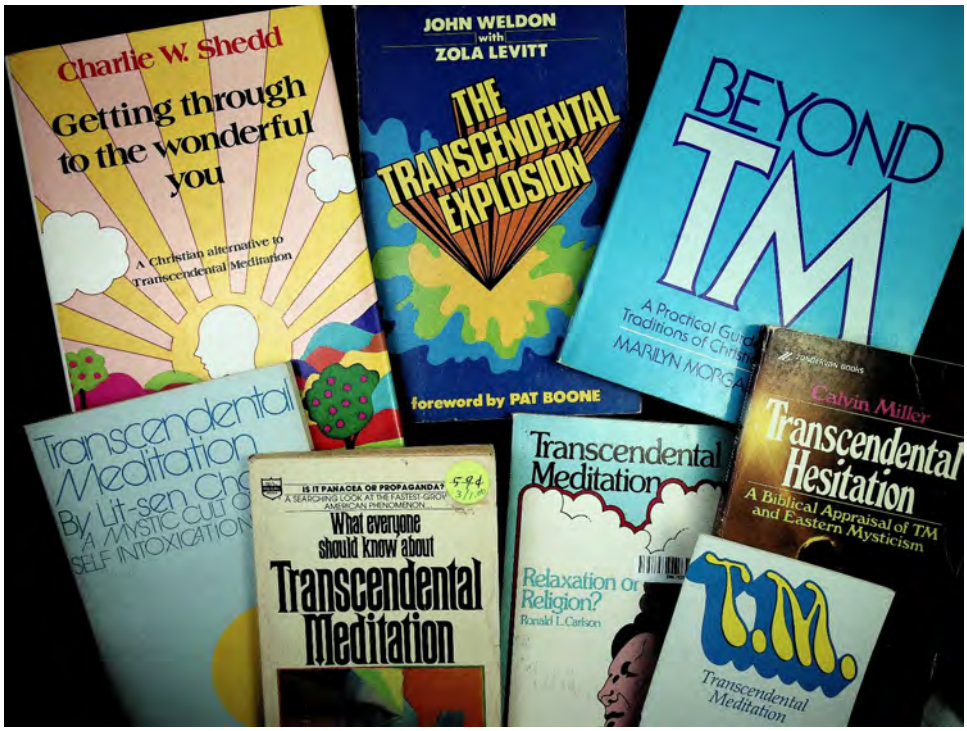
Meditation That Transcends, by Robert P. Lightner

The Meditators, by Douglas Shah

Transcendental Meditation, Assemblies of God. General Council. Executive Presbytery

How to Respond to Transcendental Meditation, by Kieth A. Gerberding

TM: A Cosmic Confidence Trick, by John Allan



Books shown:

Getting through to the wonderful you, a Christian alternative to Transcendental Meditation, by Charlie W. Shedd

Transcendental Meditation, a mystic cult of self-intoxication, by Lit-sen Chang

What everyone should know about Transcendental Meditation, by Gordon Lewis

The Transcendental Explosion, by John Weldon and Zola Levitt

Transcendental Meditation: Relaxation or Religion? by Ronald L. Carlson

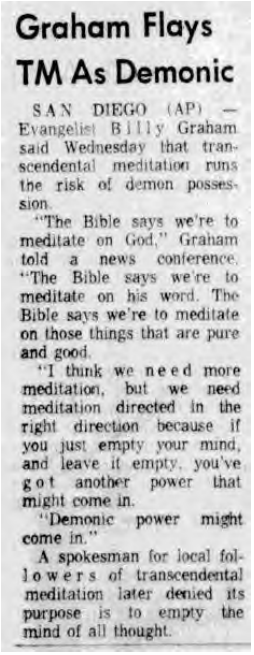
Beyond TM, by Marilyn Helleberg

Transcendental Hesitation, by Calvin Miller

Transcendental Meditation, a Christian view by David Haddon

Billy Graham quoted by the Associated Press, April 1, 1976

"Demonic power might come in."



Graham Flays TM As Demonic

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Evangelist Billy Graham said Wednesday that transcendental meditation runs the risk of demon possession.

"The Bible says we're to meditate on God," Graham told a news conference. "The Bible says we're to meditate on his word. The Bible says we're to meditate on those things that are pure and good.

"I think we need more meditation, but we need meditation directed in the right direction because if you just empty your mind, and leave it empty, you've got another power that might come in.

"Demonic power might come in."

A spokesman for local followers of transcendental meditation later denied its purpose is to empty the mind of all thought.

Billy Graham was quoted by the Associated Press in April, 1976, saying that meditation that wasn't "directed in the right direction" would be harmful, and that "demonic power might come in."

Assemblies of God General Presbytery, August 17, 1976:

"Transcendental Meditation... raises questions in the areas of psychology, theology, and sociology. These questions present the church with a challenge which it cannot ignore."

The Assemblies of God denomination issued a statement that TM raises questions that "present the church with a challenge that it cannot ignore."

Malnak v. Yogi decision, 1977

N.J. Ruling Could Spread

TM Classes Outlawed in Schools

(c) New York Times News Service

NEWARK — A U.S. District Court Judge Thursday barred the teaching of transcendental meditation in public schools on grounds the instruction was "religious" in nature and violated the First Amendment separation of the church from the state.

Although the decision by U.S. District Court Judge H. Curtis Meanor applies only to schools in New Jersey, it is the first ruling on the use of public funds for such instruction and could have a sharp impact on the financing of such programs across the country.

According to Americans United for Separation of Church and State, a Washington, D.C. based organization which monitors religious instruction in public institutions, classes in transcendental meditation had sprouted across the country in recent years. A spokesman said that last year nearly one half million dollars in public funds went to such instruction in prisons, adult education centers and schools.

Transcendental meditation is a twice daily routine of deep restful thought in which a person concentrates on a meaningless sound. In the last decade it has spread from a mostly student fad popularized by the Beatles to a national activity embraced by businessmen, politicians, housewives, dentists, movie stars and others.

Opinion has been divided on whether transcendental meditation — TM as it is commonly referred to — is a form of Hinduism or a technique that can be used in a secular context to improve self-awareness and alleviate stress.

In the first legal determination of the matter, Judge Meanor ruled that transcendental meditation is based on religious doctrine and ceremony and should therefore be excluded from public school curriculums.

Alan B. Malnak, a spokesman for the Coalition for Religious Integrity, a group of 30 parents, conservative Protestant ministers and civil libertarians which had challenged the instruction, expressed delight with the decision and the hope that it would have national impact.

GIVE YOUR ZIP CODE WHEN ANSWERING ADS

APPLES

New York Times News Service article, Intelligencer-Journal (Lancaster, Pennsylvania), October 21, 1977

Eventually, a Federal court injunction in 1977 would bring to an end the TM movement's campaign in US public schools, because of a lawsuit in which the Spiritual Counterfeits Project and Americans United for Separation of Church and State were plaintiffs. It's my opinion that this success, in which the activism of Christian evangelical groups played a major role, may have, paradoxically, enhanced the standing and perceived legitimacy of Transcendental Meditation among certain groups that were targeted for recruitment by TM leaders.

TM reactions to Evangelical critics

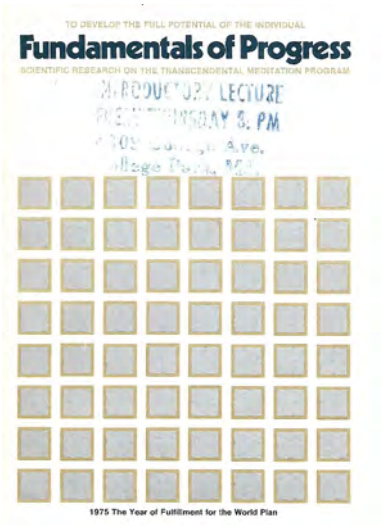
Following the court's injunction against TM:

- All objections to TM were assumed to be from fundamentalist Christians (persists today)
- TM was framed by its advocates as scientific, popular, and as being attacked by very small numbers of anti-science, anti-evolution, etc. religious fundamentalists or fanatics (persists today)

This wave of criticism of TM by evangelicals allowed TM leaders, sympathetic outsiders, and meditators to assume, incorrectly, that all criticism of TM came from a small number of fundamentalist Christians. TM movement leaders framed TM in scientific terms, and cast critics as discredited, anti-science, anti-evolution, religious fanatics. Some of these habits persist today among lifelong meditators when defending TM.

TM reactions to Evangelical critics

- This framing further boosted TM recruitment and legitimacy among academics, scientists and the generally irreligious (which I witnessed in the late 1970's)
- TM was then characterized by its advocates as progressive and forward-looking, critics as backward



"Fundamentals of Progress" TM booklet of scientific studies, 1975

This framing further boosted TM recruitment and legitimacy among irreligious academics, scientists, and members of the public. Some of these habits persist today among lifelong meditators when defending TM. The enhancement of TM's legitimacy because it was being almost exclusively attacked by Christian leaders and groups at the time was something that I witnessed as a new meditator in the late 1970s. TM's leaders cast themselves as progressive and forward-looking, with critics as primitive and backward, perhaps epitomized by titling their booklet of their TM supportive scientific research, "Fundamentals of Progress."

Civil rights violations, fraud, harm allegations against TM in US Federal courts

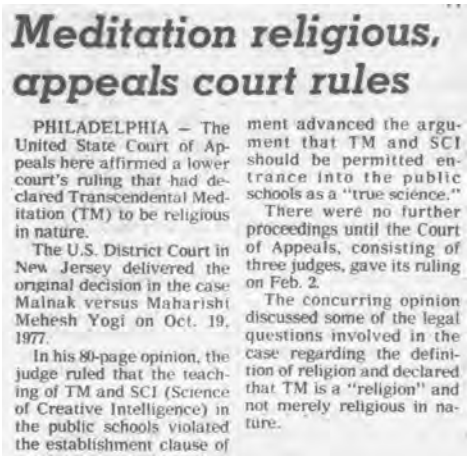
- Malnak v. Yogi (New Jersey) following other reported, threatened legal challenges on First Amendment grounds (California, Vermont)
  - ruled TM/SCI to be “religious in nature” and inadmissible in public schools in 1977
  - affirmed on Third Circuit appeal in 1979
- Williams v. Board of Education – in progress
- Kropinski v. WPEC – Jury trial, award of $138,000, appeal allowed to go forward on claims of fraud and injury, then settled
- Hendel v. WPEC & MIU – dismissed, time limited

At least four significant Federal lawsuits have been brought against TM promoting organizations, the first beginning in 1976, and the most recent, as of February 2022, still in progress.

Malnak v. Yogi opinion, Third Circuit, 1979

"We agree with the district court's finding that the SCI/TM course was religious in nature. Careful examination of the textbook, the expert testimony elicited, and the *uncontested facts concerning the puja* convince us that religious activity was involved and that there was no reversible error in the district court's determination."

(emphasis added)



Meditation religious, appeals court rules

PHILADELPHIA — The United State Court of Appeals here affirmed a lower court's ruling that had declared Transcendental Meditation (TM) to be religious in nature.

The U.S. District Court in New Jersey delivered the original decision in the case Malnak versus Maharishi Mehesh Yogi on Oct. 19, 1977.

In his 80-page opinion, the judge ruled that the teaching of TM and SCI (Science of Creative Intelligence) in the public schools violated the establishment clause of ment advanced the argument that TM and SCI should be permitted entrance into the public schools as a "true science."

There were no further proceedings until the Court of Appeals, consisting of three judges, gave its ruling on Feb. 2.

The concurring opinion discussed some of the legal questions involved in the case regarding the definition of religion and declared that TM is a "religion" and not merely religious in nature.

Journal and Courier (Lafayette, Indiana), February 17, 1979

As I mentioned, a lawsuit brought against various TM organizations, leaders, and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi himself, *Malnak v. Yogi,* resulted in an injunction ejecting the TM program from public schools in New Jersey in 1977 and was upheld on appeal in 1979. The court's opinion ruled that TM, along with a classroom SCI course, were "religious in nature."

Malnak v. Yogi District Court opinion, 1977

Malnak v. Yogi Third Circuit opinion, 1979

Published story is from a
Spiritual Counterfeits Project press release

Lynch's so-called “Quiet Time” program

- Promoting the introduction of the TM program and the TM organization's teachers into US public schools in Washington DC, San Francisco, Hartford, Tucson and Chicago, among others, in defiance of the 1979 court ruling

Despite this successful challenge, David Lynch’s foundation was created with the express purpose of introducing TM into schools, including public schools in the United States. Reportedly, the foundation has implemented its so-called “Quiet Time” program, doublespeak for the teaching and practice of TM, in several public school systems, including in San Francisco and Hartford, Connecticut.

David Lynch Foundation “Quiet Time” web page

High school student describes her TM instruction and *puja* experience to Chicago school board

'Students at a Chicago high school were led into a room with shades drawn and door windows papered over, lit only with candles and scented by incense... Jade Thomas, an incoming sophomore at Bogan Computer Technical High School, said instructors "chanted in a foreign language" and "threw rice, seasonings and oranges in a pan in front of a picture of a man." ...At one point, Jade said, "they tell us to place the flowers in the pan with everything else, and they ended the song. I felt uncomfortable because I didn't know what they were saying or who the man was in the picture."'

Jade Thomas speaking before Chicago school board
Chicago Tribune article, July 26, 2019

CPS meditation program in high schools agitates critics

'Weird' religion-based are criticisms directed at practice being tested

One such program in Chicago public schools, which was to be the centerpiece of a research project involving the University of Chicago, ended in 2017 when objections were raised as to the religious nature of the puja ritual and the mantras. Lynch's foundation refused to teach TM without inclusion of the ritual.

Chicago Board of Education Monthly Meeting - July 24, 2019

Chicago Tribune article

Williams v. Board of Education, Memorandum Opinion and Order, May 2021

"Even if Amontae [Williams] were unable to establish any religious beliefs, he would still have standing under the Free Exercise Clause, as the guarantees of the Religion Clauses are not limited to only those Americans who practice a religion... Amontae's allegations at bottom are that his school compelled him to participate in religious activity that was against his beliefs. That would be enough to establish standing under the Free Exercise Clause. In sum, Amontae has stated an injury in fact under both the Establishment and Free Exercise clauses."

After this controversy, a lawsuit brought by a student and his father against the David Lynch Foundation, the Board of Education and the University of Chicago, is currently in progress. This case, Williams versus Board of Education, brings allegations of First Amendment violations against students involved in the program, that they were compelled to take part in religious activity that was against their beliefs. It mirrors Malnak in that the puja ceremony was, and may again, be a key piece of evidence.

Quote from *Williams v. Board of Education,* Memorandum Opinion and Order, May 21, 2021, beginning on page 13

Photo from Second Class Action Amended Complaint, filed September 29, 2021

Williams v. Board of Education

Excerpts from "Plaintiffs' Motion for Class Certification for the Students..." filed March 7, 2022

- According to [a spreadsheet of student economic demographics] almost all students had poverty in common. Between 92.4 percent and 97.6 percent of the students were categorized as "low income." Thus students commonly lacked the means to consult lawyers to fully recognize, much less stand up to these constitutional violations. Exploitation by defendants of these students' vulnerability is a further commonality...
- Students were graded for their participation in the Quiet Time program.
- Given that students know their college and employment prospects are based upon their grades, "grading" is not even a subtle coercion: it operates both as an inducement and as a threat.
- Students also were given incentives such as pizza to participate in the program.

Chicago Public Schools

Filings in this case point out that the program targeted low-income students who "lacked the means to consult lawyers to fully recognize, much less stand up to these constitutional violations." They allege that the program exploited students' vulnerability. Though this program was allegedly part of a research study, students were offered pizza to encourage participation. This kind of incentive, in the context of likely food insecurity, further calls into question the validity and ethics of TM research.

Kropinski v. WPEC, 1988

"Kropinski... asserts three basic claims. The first lies in fraud: defendants fraudulently promised that the practice of TM would confer certain personal and societal benefits; as part of this fraudulent scheme, the defendants claimed that the benefits of TM were "scientifically confirmed.""

"Robert Kropinski can proceed against the defendants on his claims of fraud and negligent infliction of physical injury."

U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit, opinion

Jury award of $138,000; appeal settled before trial

Jury awards $138,000 to former MIU student

By FRANK SANTIAGO
Register Staff Writer

A federal court jury awarded a former Maharishi International University student $138,000 Tuesday in the first damage suit brought against the university in Fairfield and the Transcendental Meditation movement.

Robert Kropinski, 36, a Philadelphia, Pa., businessman who was also a TM instructor, claimed he had been bilked. Instead of improving his physical and mental health and teaching him how to fly, TM left him with a range of serious mental problems, he said.

"I'm enormously happy, obviously," Kropinski said of the verdict, which was returned by a jury in Washington, D.C. He called the decision a vindication.

A meditator for 11 years, Kropinski had accused the school and the TM's World Plan Executive Council of the United States of fraud and negligence. He attended the Fairfield school in the late 1970s.

The jury declined to award the punitive damages he had requested in the $1.5 million lawsuit.

Des Moines Register, January 14, 1987

Two other Federal lawsuits in the 1980s and 1990s - one resulting in a judgment for damages, the other dismissed on a technicality - raised allegations of fraud, injury, and false claims by the organization offering TM.

At issue in these cases were the basic marketing points supporting TM: that it's not a religion, lifestyle or belief system, that it always provides positive personal and societal benefits and never causes harm, that scientific evidence supports all these elements. Though no Federal court decision addressed all these issues, ample evidence exists that such claims supporting TM are at minimum controversial, and sometimes are simply not true.

Kropinski v. WPEC opinion decided August 5, 1988, at 950

Hendel v. WPEC and MIU, 1997

"Defendants claim the practice of TM involves only 20 minutes twice a day, this is not true. Defendants claim the practice of TM requires no change in lifestyle or beliefs, this is not true. Defendants claim the practice of TM has only positive and no negative effects, this is not true. Defendants claim the practice of TM is beneficial for everyone, this is not true. Defendants claim the benefits of TM are scientifically proven, when, in fact, the practice of TM was experimental. Defendants further claim that TM will improve memory, reduce stress and anxiety, improve health and reverse aging, this is not true."

- from Hendel's answer to interrogatories

REASSESSING TM

Followers of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi have become generally accepted in Fairfield, Ia. So this may come as a surprise: Some former meditators allege that TM can cause serious, emotional damage. Are they right? A federal court likely will decide.

Tranquil state of TM shaken by former meditators' charges

Des Moines Register, November 18, 1990

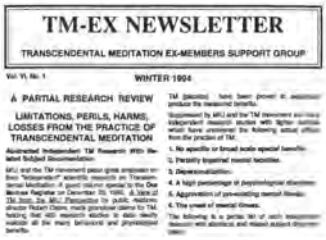
Hendel v. WPEC and MIU, December 30, 1997, at 659.

The dissenting judge quoted the following from another of Hendel's answers:

"Mahesh Yogi continually repeated that discomfort and negative experiences were good. Specifically, he stated that hallucinations, headaches, head pressure, depression, physical movements, vision problems, rage, violence, mood swings, disorientation, forgetfulness, lack of energy, ringing in the ears, seeing light in the head with eyes closed and blackouts were good experiences. He always stated "something good is happening" whenever questioned by TM participants who were having these experiences. He further stated that these experiences were necessary and were the result of TM and unstressing. He always advised individuals to endure and be strong and courageous."

Former meditators, teachers, MIU students

- TM-EX, Transcendental Meditation Ex-Members Support Group, 1986-1995 – Patrick Ryan, et al.


TM-EX NEWSLETTER

TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION EX-MEMBERS SUPPORT GROUP

WINTER 1994

A PARTIAL RESEARCH REVIEW

LIMITATIONS, PERILS, HARMS, LOSSES FROM THE PRACTICE OF TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION

- Numerous websites and online presence beginning in 1993
- Usenet discussion group alt.meditation.transcendental (1990's)

From a 1989 issue of the TM-EX Newsletter:

> Transcendental Meditation Ex-Members Support Group (TM-EX) was founded by former Maharishi International University (MIU) faculty, students, TM teachers, sidhas, meditators, and caring relatives of members of the TM movement. TM-EX is a support network to help former and current members of the TM movement in making the transition to life outside the TM movement. As former members, we have experienced the transition and are available to assist you. ...
>
> Although numerous religious based groups have challenged TM in the past, TM-EX is not affiliated with any of these. Its members come from a wide variety of religious and philosophical backgrounds. What we do have in common, is our desire to assist those leaving the movement; to make the public aware of the fraud within the movement; and the physical and psychological harm, that has resulted for many, from the practices of the TM Program.

An archive of TM-EX newsletters may be found at my minet.org website.

Other related websites, most of which date to this period, include:

Falling Down the TM Rabbit Hole at suggestibility.org

TranceNet

Don Krieger's Web Site

The Honest Truth About TM

Behind the TM Facade

Transcendental Deception

TM-Free Blog, which I co-coordinate and contribute to

Fort Lauderdale News, February 15, 1968
Caricature by Thomas Alston

Former meditators, teachers and MIU students played key roles in the bringing of these lawsuits, and the raising of public awareness of these issues surrounding Transcendental Meditation. TM-EX, the TM ex-members support group, published a newsletter and made other efforts to educate the public in the 1980s and early 1990s. With the creation of the Internet and World-Wide Web, websites exposing the inner teachings and workings of TM were established starting in 1993. An online discussion group focused on TM helped to network former meditators, teachers and critics, and would foster the growth of a dissenting, alternative narrative to TM's promotional efforts.

Scientists hit TM 'hokum'

By Darrell Sifford

© 1977 Knight Newspapers

Four years ago, after I took my instruction in transcendental meditation (TM), I was convinced that the marvelous things that happened to me during meditation were caused by the magic-like effect my mantra had on my nervous system.

The mantra is the word — really it's a meaningless sound — that each meditator is given by his instructor to be repeated silently during meditation.

It's the meditator's passport to the never-never land where he relaxes and recharges his battery.

My instructor said that while some sounds have a negative effect on the nervous system — he used the example of the scratching of a fingernail on a blackboard — other sounds have a positive effect. Mantras, he said, are sounds chosen because, in effect, they help lull the nervous system into a state of deep relaxation.

He never would tell me how many mantras exist or the basis on which they are assigned. Neither would any other TM teachers I asked in the years after that. All answered my questions in the same general way:

The mantra is assigned to fit the meditator's personality and the method of assignment is something the instructor is taught personally by TM's patron saint, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

There is a finite number of mantras — so obviously no meditator has exclusive use of a mantra.

But that's as far as any instructor would go in discussing mantras with me.

Well, apparently, the "finite" number of mantras really is smaller than I thought it was. There are just 16, and the sole yardstick on which assignment of the mantra is made is the meditator's age.

This is the information contained in a notarized statement presented Oct. 28 in St. Louis at a "meditation-related therapies" seminar attended by scientists involved in meditation research.

The statement was signed by Gregory J. Randolph, who said he studied to be a TM instructor under Maharishi for five months in 1973 in Spain and then taught TM in Redding, Calif., for 16 months.

These, his statement said, are the mantras taught in 1973 and the age groups to which they were assigned.

The spellings are Randolph's own, the statement said, because the mantras were given verbally and never officially written down.

Age 8-11 — Eng
12-13 — Em
14-15 — Enga
16-17 — Ema
18-19 — Ieng
20-21 — Iem
22-23 — Idnga
24-25 — Iema
26-29 — Skirim
30-34 — Shiring
35-39 — Kirim
40-44 — Kiring
45-49 — Hirim
50-54 — Hiring
55-59 — Sham
60 and over — Shama

When I checked my age group, I

TM —

Please turn to Page Two

Des Moines Tribune, Page 1, December 3, 1977, and several other newspapers including the Boston Globe and Philadelphia Inquirer

The skeptic and scientific community, as well as a few journalists, have also from time to time published investigative stories raising critical questions about TM, including revealing the list of 'secret' mantras on the front pages of several newspapers.

Why criticize TM?

Why criticize TM?

- We critics possess verifiable, though obscure, hard to find documents and details, and personal experiences, drowned out by TM marketing, particularly online and in social media
- Addressing individuals' misgivings or situations involving TM that cause social difficulty, discomfort, doubt (family, friends, colleagues), before or after TM instruction
- Assuring people in these situations that they're “not the only one”
- Directing those who want it, to assistance and counseling

Why should anyone criticize TM in the face of what appears to be, on its surface, an impenetrable positive reputation as a way to simply solve all problems, endorsed by celebrities for over 50 years? I view this primarily as a matter of sharing information that is verifiable, though obscure, sometimes hard to find, and drowned out by TM marketing efforts.

Critics address the individual experiences of people who find TM problematic, and assure them that they’re not the only ones who have had these experiences, which includes meditators, along with friends, family and colleagues of meditators. They’re justified in seeking assistance and counseling.

Why criticize TM?

- Keeping TM advocates out of places where they don't belong, such as under the auspices of government agencies in the US where the religiosity of TM violates Constitutional protections
- Pointing out that the schools and prisons that they focus on are contexts where coercion is possible and likely
- Preventing attempts to exploit vulnerable people, including those in poverty
- Exposing programs and alleged “research studies” calculated to provide publicity and promotional opportunities for the TM program.

Keeping TM out of places where it doesn’t belong is a worthwhile effort, pointing out that government sponsorship and coercion are unacceptable. TM advocates should not be given an opportunity to exploit vulnerable people with programs and alleged “research studies” calculated to provide publicity and promotional opportunities for the TM program.

Interpersonal relationships are often strained because of TM involvement. Immersion in the TM program sometimes results in demands for unusual lifestyle restrictions and expressions of narcissistic attitudes based on a dogmatic insistence that TM provides unique benefits to those who practice it.

TM involvement strains relationships

- Demands for compliance with a partner's TM's lifestyle requirements:
  - "... he had decided that he wanted to teach TM... in order to teach TM we would have to live in a house that faced a certain direction… Before he could train as a TM teacher we'd have to move. I was furious."
- Narcissistic, supremacist attitudes fostered by TM immersion:
  - "He hinted that he somehow thought that people who did TM were in some way on a higher plane than people who didn't. He told me that people who did TM looked younger than people who didn't."

Excerpts from "Ashley's story: My experience of my husband's journey into Transcendental Meditation" at the TM-Free Blog

Recent personal stories at the TM-Free Blog:

Ashley's story: My experience of my husband's journey into Transcendental Meditation

Tony's story of his journey through, and out of, the TM program

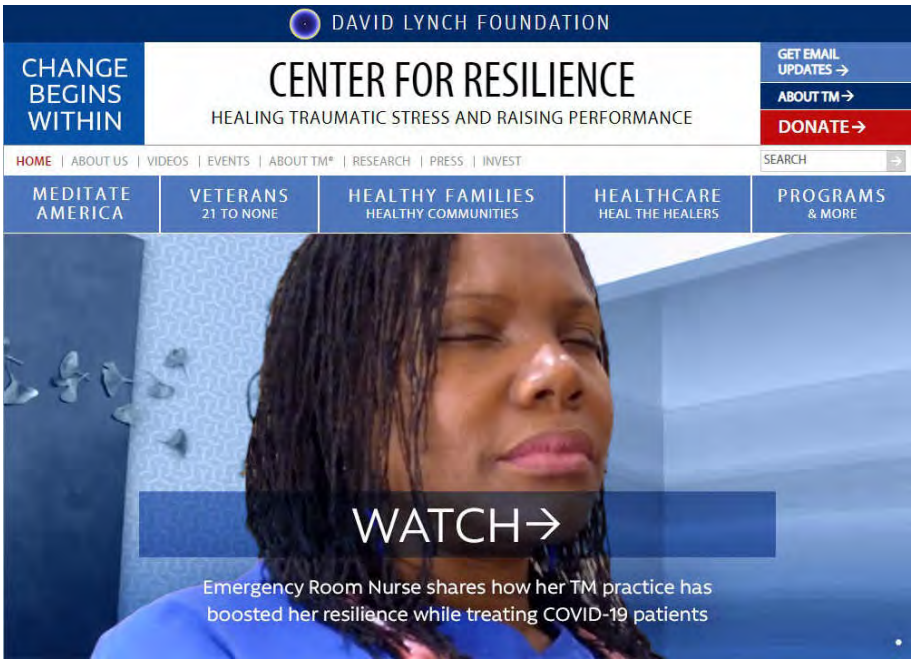
Leslie's story: "The Truth Pissed Me Off"

More personal stories

Current TM promotional activities, primarily of the David Lynch Foundation

- Ongoing media presence, publishing
- Teaching TM in urban public schools (dormant in the United States)
- Offering TM as remedy for PTSD and COVID related workplace burnout
- Targeting vulnerable populations: veterans, healthcare workers, others suffering from trauma
- Making inroads into US government, particularly Veterans Administration and U.S. Army

Current efforts by the David Lynch Foundation and the TM teaching organization orchestrate a continuing media presence. While the foundation has attempted to offer TM in public schools in the United States, that program appears to be dormant because of the currently active litigation in Chicago.



Recent David Lynch Foundation website front page

The David Lynch Foundation has been attempting to offer TM as a remedy for PTSD suffered by veterans and healthcare workers. This is a targeted effort to address people suffering from trauma, and as with other questionable programs of this nature, aims to cast itself as a functional, effective alternative treatment in fields where other methods often fail.

David Lynch Foundation website as of this writing

An example of the “Heal the Healers Now” TM instruction program of the David Lynch Foundation, in a New England hospital group

STATEMENT OF WORK
Operation Warrior Wellness of the David Lynch Foundation – Resilient Warrior Program

STATEMENT OF WORK

Date: 01 April 2017

Project Name: Operation Warrior Wellness of the David Lynch Foundation – Resilient Warrior Program

Requesting Activity: neuroscience & rehabilitation Center, Traumatic Brain Injury Clinic, Dwight David Eisenhower Army Medical Center, Fort Gordon, Georgia 30905

Total Cost of Contract: $20,000.00 per year. Operation Warrior Wellness of the David Lynch Foundation will provide the Resilient Warrior Transcendental Meditation (TM) Program. The TM Program will be provided on an annual contract to be taught at DDEAMC, Neuroscience & Rehabilitation Center, traumatic Brain Injury Clinic on a quarterly basis. The TM Program will teach a maximum of eight (8) Service Members / Candidates per course. The clinic is solely responsible for providing the minimum / maximum number of Service Members / Candidates for this course. The cost per course is $5,000.00; an annual cost of $20,000.00. The possible costs if all options are exercised are $100,000.00. The Operation Warrior Wellness of the David Lynch Foundation is not responsible if the clinic provides less than the maximum of eight (8) for a Resilient Warrior Program; however, will teach as many that is in attendance to a maximum of eight (8) per Resilient Warrior Program.

Excerpts from David Lynch Foundation / US Army Contract (2017)

Federal contracts have been issued to pay Lynch's foundation for TM instruction of veterans in U.S. Army medical facilities.

This is an example of one such contract.

David Lynch Foundation contracts (ten records) with Department of the Army, U.S. Department of Defense

Four similar contracts with other TM movement entities

Challenging the marketing of Transcendental Meditation

Assumptions exploited by TM marketing

- Trust – celebrity, wealth, media, power, status, authority, “ancient tradition,” religious figure who gets called “His Holiness,” the friend who brought you to an intro lecture
- Effectiveness – that TM is worth the money and time, reinforced with the alleged scientific research and evidence, primarily that which TM advocates produced for themselves
- Organizational values and agenda – these are almost never mentioned other than an interest in “world peace”
- Harm – coasts on the popular perception that meditation never causes any harm to anyone

The marketing of TM depends on several unstated assumptions. The first of these is that the TM movement is trustworthy, along with those who endorse it. That assumption hinges on the privileges of celebrity, wealth, and perceived power and authority. Also significant is that many people come to TM through a trusted friend or family member.

Another assumption is that TM is effective, otherwise so many people wouldn’t be talking about it, reinforced by claims of scientific evidence for the practice.

The organizational values and agenda are hidden from most people. The only thing that emerges, sometimes, is an interest in “world peace” but with few details as to how that might happen.

TM, and meditation in general, also coast on the assumption that meditation never causes harm.

Challenging the assumptions exploited by TM marketing

- Trust – that people/organizations who misrepresent themselves should never be trusted, no matter who they are
- Effectiveness – the scientific evidence, largely produced in-house, is questionable to dubious, not everyone benefits, many stop practicing after a short time
- Organizational values and agenda – are those of a patriarchal, sexist, authoritarian, right-wing, theocratic, religious supremacist, politically connected organization in its country of origin
- Harm – some people experience increased anxiety, depression, other consequences of involvement

These assumptions can be directly challenged. People and organizations who misrepresent themselves shouldn't be trusted. Scientific evidence for TM's effectiveness is questionable, and it's likely that people experience short-term benefits for reasons other than the meditation itself.

The organizational values of TM are those of a patriarchal, sexist, authoritarian, right-wing, theocratic, religious supremacist, politically connected organization in its country of origin.

Some people experience uncomfortable to harmful effects of meditation of any form, a fact which has recently, slowly, been gaining some public awareness. This is in contrast to TM teachers' frequent insistence that such discomfort is temporary and worth enduring to gain eventual benefit.

TM marketing weaknesses

- TM trust building vs. unjustified trust
- TM absolutism with religious origins vs. doubt, extensive research, questioning and free inquiry by outsiders/non-devotees
- TM reverence and deference vs. irreverence
- TM mysteries and subterfuge vs. openness and informed consent
- TM dogma, jargon, ambiguity vs. plain language
- TM “free lunch” vs. too good to be true

Countering attempts at recruitment and promotion of TM in realms where it doesn’t belong, in my view, also involves an understanding of TM’s marketing weaknesses, which might not be all that obvious. The foundation of TM movement activities is that of absolutism seeking social acceptability and approval, not free inquiry and actual research. That absolutism demands reverence and deference to their claimed authority, where healthy irreverence is appropriate. TM is full of mysteries, versus openness and informed consent. It’s full of dogma, jargon and ambiguity about its methods, versus plain language. TM promoters seek to build trust when it isn’t justified, offering a “free lunch” that’s too good to be true.

TM marketing weaknesses

- TM “om percent” vs. the average person
- TM sectarianism and political agenda vs. secular nonpartisanship
- TM alleged disregard of professional standards, ethics, due diligence and civil rights for expedience when working with vulnerable people vs. never giving special exceptions to proponents of novel and unorthodox solutions
- TM incorrect concept of science as fixed, absolute body of knowledge serving as cross-cultural stamp of approval vs. science as a means of testing and knowing, changing over time

The reliance on the wealthy and famous to promote TM is a weakness; I refer to them as the “om percent” who can afford to be wrong. TM is connected with sectarianism and a political agenda. Historically, promotion of TM, and associated research studies, has allegedly disregarded professional standards, ethics, and civil rights for expedience, none of which warrants special exceptions because their methods are unorthodox or novel.

The approach by TM’s proponents to science and scientific research is that of gaining a stamp of approval from a fixed, absolute body of authoritative knowledge. In contrast, authentic scientific inquiry is a means of testing and knowing, which doesn’t rely on a preconceived assumption of a particular TM supportive result.

Tweet-sized sound bites, addressing potential meditators, supporters, researchers on the threshold

- Approach TM with your eyes open
- Why trust your mind to people who misrepresent themselves, their activities, methods and goals, to you?

Typical TM online advertisement

- TM comes with a lot of stuff (dogma) you probably don't want or need, not disclosed up front, they're offering more than just meditation (that's why TM instruction takes so long)
- Research touted by TM marketers most often conducted by their own people, is dubious and can't be trusted on its own

From these faults in TM marketing, short sound bites that can address potential meditators, supporters and researchers can be developed. Here are a few that I've been using online in recent years:

Approach TM with your eyes open - in contrast to TM marketing that frequently shows people with their eyes closed.

Why trust your mind to people who misrepresent themselves to you?

TM comes with a lot of stuff you don't want or need. It's more than just closing your eyes and thinking about something special.

The research they offer is dubious. It's often done by their own people and it can't be trusted on its own.

Tweet-sized sound bites, addressing potential meditators, supporters, researchers on the threshold

- Does the TM organization line up with your values?
  - Religious fundamentalism masquerading as an allegedly scientifically verified faux universalism, as its foundation
  - Portion of fees indirectly supports schools and enterprises which have a very close relationship with Hindutva (Hindu supremacist) organizations including the RSS and the BJP/Modi government in India
  - No women in positions of power or influence, hierarchy is exclusively male

Other methods of countering these recruitment efforts for the TM program can also be developed from the available facts.

Everyone should ask whether the TM organization's methods and roots are compatible with their own values.

A specific religious fundamentalism has always motivated the TM movement, disguising itself as a false universalism that underlies everything, including all other religions and science.

A portion of fees collected from TM instruction (about ten per cent) is sent offshore and eventually benefits the organization's Hindu fundamentalist schools in India, which have a close relationship with right-wing Hindutva organizations and the Indian government.

There are no women in positions of authority anywhere in the TM movement. The hierarchy is exclusively male.

Debunking the Transcendental Meditation four basic statements of faith

Challenging the basic marketing points

- Not a religion
- Not a philosophy
- Not a change in lifestyle
- Nothing to believe in

Here is what TM is not:

It's not a religion. Nearly eight million people of all religions, as well as people who have no religion, have learned TM over the past sixty years.

It's not a philosophy. TM is a technique you learn and then practice on your own; nothing else.

It's not a change in lifestyle. Once you learn to meditate, you don't have to change your diet and suddenly start eating tofu (unless you like it!).

And finally, there is nothing to believe in. You can be 100 percent skeptical, and it doesn't matter. The technique works equally well whether you believe in it or not.

Excerpt from "Strength in Stillness" by Bob Roth, pages 27 & 28

Returning now to the four primary marketing points of Transcendental Meditation I mentioned at the beginning, which I consider to be TM's statements of faith, each of which attempts to deny reality. These appear in *Strength in Stillness*, the recent book by Bob Roth, the CEO of Lynch's foundation, at the beginning of the chapter where he defines TM.

This portion of the book at Google Books

“But it's *not a religion!*”

- Deliberately confusing eyes-closed meditation practice with everything else that is the “TM Program”
- Taking an activity (closing eyes and thinking a thought) that has no inherent meaning, and layering vast amounts of meaning onto it

- “Solution to all problems”
- Could bring about “world peace”
- Offers personal enlightenment (whatever that might be)
- Could bring about an Age of Enlightenment (whatever that might be)

This is a book of revival for the age. If the golden era is ever to dawn on human society, if peace and harmony are to reign on earth, The Science of Being and Art of Living will provide a free way for it to come. A new humanity will be born, fuller in conception and richer in experience and accomplishments in all fields. Joy of life will belong to every man, love will dominate human society, truth and virtue will reign in the world, peace on earth will be permanent and all will live in fulfilment, in fullness of life in God-consciousness.

From “Science of Being and Art of Living,” Maharishi's treatise on TM. First paragraph of the preface by Charles F. Lutes (1966)

I believe that Roth, like all other TM teachers, is playing with an ambiguity, between the actual act of meditating, which in a sense can be isolated from dogma and meaning, and all the rest of the content of the “TM program” which is much more involved and complicated than meditation practice. There’s more to TM than just closing one’s eyes and thinking special thoughts.

Advocates for the TM program make specific claims for it, all pointing to a world transforming agenda: that it may provide a “solution to all problems,” that it could bring about “world peace,” that it offers individual “enlightenment” and that Maharishi’s movement has actually initiated an “age of enlightenment.” Earlier claims, as in this excerpt from the preface of one of the basic TM texts, offer promises of a “golden age” of “peace and harmony” when “a new humanity will be born” through popularization of the practice.

These are all evidence of an ultimate, religious purpose for the movement that is only vaguely mentioned during the TM instruction process.

Science of Being and Art of Living via archive.org

“But it's *not a religion!*”

- These elements are fundamentally religious in nature, not significantly different from the claims some make for prayer in various other religions

Question: Is this meditation prayer?

Answer: A very good form of prayer, a most refined and most powerful form of prayer is this meditation which directly leads us to the field of the Creator, to the sources of Creation, to the field of God.

Question: Through meditation, you say we can feel the state and influence of Absolute Truth. Through meditation with the mind, that mind is the instrument through which man can know God?

Answer: Yes, yes. Because the instrument of our knowledge is the mind. It is from the mind that we can know the world, we can know the God, we can know everything. When the mind is engaged in the world, engaged in experiencing things, bound by time and space, then the mind is said to be individual mind. When the mind through the process of meditation gets to the state of Being, in that state the individual mind gains the status of Cosmic Mind. And that is the real status of the mind.

Maharishi, “Deep Meditation,” transcript of a lecture given in 1960

These sorts of grandiose claims are not unusual for religious movements, and they mimic claims sometimes made for the effectiveness of prayer. In a 1960 lecture, later published in a pamphlet and book, Maharishi made no secret of his belief that TM is “a very good form of prayer” which leads to “the field of God.”

“But it's *not a religion!*”

- Religious concepts are sanitized, pervasive to the point of being almost unnoticeable
- Some publications are more explicit
  - “Source of thought” or “field of consciousness = “light of God”
  - “Natural Law” = “Will of God”
  - Contact with that “pure consciousness” through TM causes “thoughts [to] become more intelligent”
  - When TM teachers use the word “unbounded” to describe human consciousness, creativity or thought, they've strayed into religious, unscientific territory

The source of thought and the source of Natural Law

In Transcendental Consciousness, your mind fathoms the pure, unbounded continuum of pure consciousness, the source of all thought, a reservoir of pure, unlimited creativity, energy, and intelligence. This, Maharishi explains, is *Ātmā*, the ocean of pure knowledge, power, and bliss, the field of *total knowledge*. It is what religions describe as the light of God within. It is the cosmic Self of everyone. No other experience fills the mind with greater happiness or fulfillment.

When you experience this inner field, Maharishi explains, your mind becomes infused with the boundless creativity, intelligence, and energy of pure consciousness, just like a sponge soaking up water. As a result, your thoughts become more intelligent and powerful and your actions more dynamic and successful.

Natural Law and the Will of God

For Maharishi, the terms *Natural Law* and *Will of God* are synonymous. To live in accord with Natural Law is to live in accord with God's will.

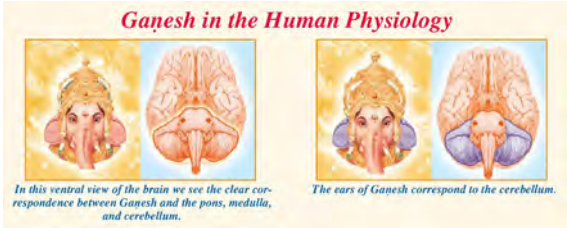
Images from “The Complete Book of Yogic Flying,” pages 73 and 157

Religious concepts are sanitized to the point of being unrecognizable and unnoticeable, but some publications have been more explicit. In this example, the “source of thought” is equated with the “light of God,” and “Natural Law” is equated with the “Will of God.” They even make the claim that through TM, “thoughts become more intelligent.” Every time a TM teacher uses the word “unbounded” to describe human consciousness, they’ve strayed into religious, unscientific territory.

The Complete Book of Yogic Flying

“But it's *not a religion!*”

- The TM organization leader has written two books describing the divine beings of Hinduism having correspondences to, or being resident in, the human body and its organs including the brain



Devatås (divine beings) from Vedic/Hindu scripture shown as residing in the human brain. Images from the front cover and contents of a book by TM “great king” Tony Nader, and published by MIU Press.

In two books written by the current leader of the TM movement, Tony Nader, the divine beings of Hinduism are shown as having correspondences with, or being resident in, the human body and its organs.

Ramayan in Human Physiology

Human Physiology: Expression of Veda and the Vedic Literature

“But it's *not a religion!*”

- Mantras are “specially selected” for each person and have special “life supporting” properties
  - Mantras are chosen by rote based on age, are not special nor secret, and have traditional religious connotations, associations with Hindu deities
- Puja is a trivial “ceremony of gratitude” that prospective meditators need not care about
  - Puja is essential to instruction, cannot be omitted, is clearly of religious origin, serves multiple purposes including assertion of authority and expectation of reverence, and is sprung on prospective meditators without warning or prior consent – otherwise “TM is a Cadillac without gas”

Age	Mantra
03-10	ENG
10-12	EM
12-14	ENGA
14-16	EMA
16-18	AENG
18-20	AEM
20-22	AENGA
22-24	AEMA
24-30	SHIRING
30-35	SHIRIM
35-40	HIRING
40-45	HIRIM
45-50	KIRING
50-55	KIRIM
55-60	SHIAM
60 +	SHIAMA

TM proponents often misleadingly insist that mantras are specially selected for each individual person based on personality or other unspecified criteria. As has long been publicly known, mantra selection is based on age at the time of initiation. Mantras may be meaningless to most meditators, but in Indian tradition, all of them have religious connotations and aren’t in any way secret. The initiation ritual, the “puja,” is by definition a religious ritual. Its details and purpose are deliberately not discussed with meditators.

The TM and TM-Sidhi Techniques

Demystifying the Puja, a 3 part series

“But it's *not a religion!*”

- TM insiders are inundated with religious imagery, as in these examples from the Maharishi Channel

Inside the TM movement, religious imagery is not unusual and can be regularly seen on the movement’s online video channel.

Clockwise from top right:

This is a lingam at Maharishi's former residence, which represents Shiva. The photo behind it is of Maharishi making a pilgrimage to the ice lingam in the Amarnath cave in 1957. “According to Hindu religious beliefs, this is the place where Shiva explained the secret of life and eternity to his divine consort, Parvati.” (Wikipedia) This brief view of this lingam appears regularly between programs on the channel.

The bottom two images are from an animated music video that appears every few hours on the channel, “Heaven is Descending.” Hanuman is shown flying past images of other Hindu deities, and Krishna appears with his flute.

Maharishi Channel

Challenging the basic marketing points

- Not a philosophy
  - SCI, the theoretical aspect of TM, is inseparable from it, is a philosophy without scientific support, largely of religious origin, sanitized for a Western secular audience, to posit that TM is the answer to all problems
- Not a change in lifestyle
  - 2 x 20 minutes a day at minimum, advanced products/practices further affect lifestyle and involve substantial time and money commitment

The claim of being “not a philosophy” is misleading, because TM is the practical aspect of the “Science of Creative Intelligence” which by definition is a philosophy without scientific support. It is of religious origin, sanitized for an irreligious Western audience unfamiliar with its background.

The claim that TM doesn’t involve a “change in lifestyle” ignores the fact that rearranging one’s schedule to devote at least 40 minutes a day to meditation is, for many people, a substantial change in basic life habits. Advanced forms of TM involve an even more substantial change in habits and commitment of time, which can amount to several hours each day. This level of practice is the ultimate intent of the program, which begins with the more modest practice of twice-daily TM.

Challenging the basic marketing points

- Nothing to believe in
  - Introductory sessions present elements of SCI, including its religion-based model of the human mind and thought, with which basic agreement is necessary to proceed
- Benefits accrue to all who practice TM
  - Some have detrimental outcomes (anxiety, depression) and many stop meditating in a short time

The claim that there is “nothing to believe in” disregards the fact that the TM induction process is a presentation of relatively esoteric assertions about the human mind and consciousness, with which basic agreement is necessary to proceed. Advanced courses in the program require prior permission and evaluation by a TM teacher, thus those who openly express disbelief in the fundamental tenets would likely not be welcome.

The implied claim that every individual practicing TM gains benefits doesn’t hold up. Some experience detrimental outcomes, including relaxation-induced anxiety and depression, and even the movement’s own studies often show a substantial dropout rate among new meditators.

Popular Science: Meditation isn’t always calming. For a select few, it may lead to psychosis.

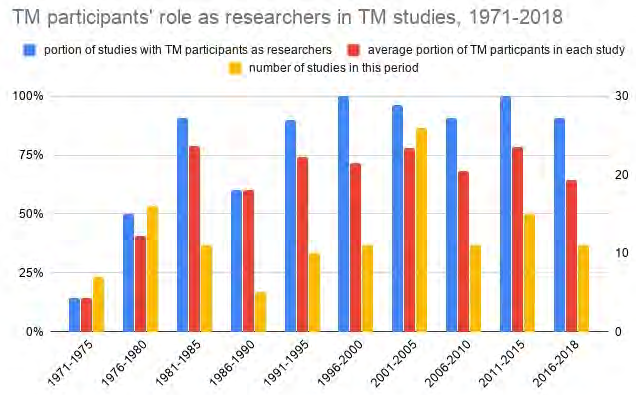
The Atlantic: The Dark Knight of the Soul

Challenging the claims that TM is “evidence based” and supported by vast numbers of scientific studies

Challenging the allegedly scientific claims

- Implication that research has produced a general scientific consensus supporting TM
  - Most allegedly scientific claims for anything more substantial than simple relaxation are only accepted by devotees/lifelong meditators; research offered is most often performed by, or under the influence of, lifelong meditators, TM teachers, MIU faculty, regardless of where it occurred, who can affect research design and the interpretation of data

TM marketers have always implied that scientific research has produced some general scientific consensus supporting TM's claims. In fact, there is no such consensus. Most of the scientific research offered as supporting evidence for any substantial effect beyond what can be attributed to simple relaxation has been produced with the participation of, or under the influence of, lifelong TM devotees, often TM teachers and MIU faculty. They attempt to downplay this fact by stressing the institution where the research was performed, or what government agency funded the research.



TM original research listed on the tm.org website in 2019, evaluated over five-year periods. Of the 100 studies since 1981, 92 of them involved authors who were meditating individuals and/or affiliated MIU/MUM faculty. The portion of studies with TM participants as researchers during each period is represented by the blue bars.

I've produced a detailed analysis of some of the research. Of the 100 papers currently listed on the tm.org website that qualify as original research, that were published since 1981, fully 92% of them name at least one author who has a known formal relationship with MIU or TM organizations.

The dubious research claims of Transcendental Meditation

Challenging the allegedly scientific claims

- Meditators preceded others doing research on TM. They were able to set research precedents, asking only the questions to obtain results that matched their preconceptions and doctrine (SCI)

- TM is treated as a “black box,” meditation practice is assumed to be the sole cause of alleged/observed effects and benefits

Early TM meditators preceded others doing research on TM in the late 1960s and early 1970s. They set research precedents, asking only the questions that could obtain results that match TM’s underlying doctrine. TM has always been treated as a “black box,” where the meditation practice, and nothing else, is assumed to be the sole cause of any observed effects.

New PTSD studies: TM as a "black box" - what's inside?

Challenging the allegedly scientific claims

- Cooperation with independent researchers is evidently contingent on TM organization control over experimental design and scope

"We want to make sure that they're going to protect the integrity of our subjects, because one's in a very delicate state when one is practicing these. And also that they've designed the experiment so that they won't disturb the meditative state *and test something other than what they're supposed to test.*"

MIU professor and movement attorney Steven Druker, when interviewed by me in 1979, referring to research on "yogic flying" and the "TM-Sidhi" program. My emphasis.

Steven Druker, J.D., Professor of Law and Government, Maharishi International University

As was implied in my 1979 interview of a then prominent MIU professor, cooperation with researchers outside the movement is evidently contingent on TM organization control over experimental design and scope. The key phrase here is that independent researchers may not "test something other than what they're supposed to test."

Photo of Steven Druker from *World Government News,* January 1979

The "TM-Sidhi Program" episode of the "Enlightenment Radio Program" which I produced in 1979

Challenging the allegedly scientific claims

- Confounding influences, including the content of the multi-session instruction process, in research settings, are never questioned, never disclosed and are considered “Confidential Knowledge” that must be kept “secret” forever

Article 8 - Protection of Confidential Knowledge

Subsection 1 In order to protect the knowledge of Maharishi Vedic Science the Associate undertakes in perpetuity to keep secret all parts of the Confidential Knowledge and not to attempt to give it out in any form, written, oral, electronic, or other, to any individual or organisation. Nor shall he discuss the Confidential Knowledge with third parties or in any form make copies or summaries of the Confidential Knowledge in whole or in part without prior approval from MVU. He specifically agrees to take upon himself this obligation with regard to Confidential Knowledge that he has been entrusted with before as well as after the date of this Agreement, thereby confirming and supplementing commitments made by him in connection with previous training and instruction by MVU or its Affiliates.

From “Agreement for Associates of Maharishi Vedic University,” the TM organization entity that trains its teachers, 2012

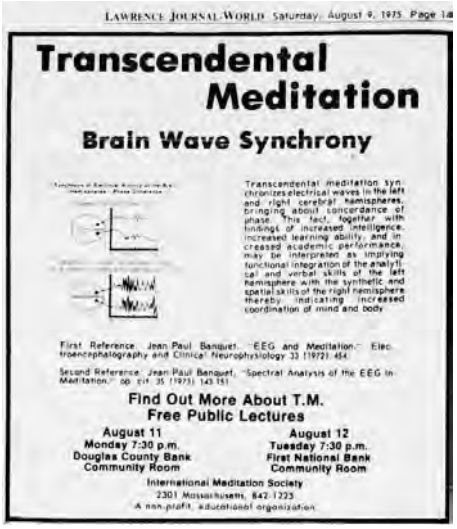
Extraneous or confounding influences which may affect the results obtained are never questioned in TM research. These include the content of TM instruction delivered to new meditators either privately or in group sessions. What’s presented by TM teachers is never examined to determine how it may influence the individuals being studied, nor is it disclosed in detail to those who aren’t trained to be teachers. The content of TM teacher training, by contractual agreement, is considered “Confidential Knowledge” that must be kept secret forever.

Confounding Variables, ICPSR

McNamee R. Confounding and confounders. Occupational and Environmental Medicine 2003;60:227-234.

Challenging the allegedly scientific claims

- Research supporting “brain wave synchrony” as an indicator of a unique state of consciousness produced by TM, is sole-sourced to meditating researchers. Recent PTSD research attributes TM's benefits to these alleged brain changes, and not to other aspects or influences of TM instruction.



LAWRENCE JOURNAL-WORLD Saturday, August 9, 1975 Page 1a

Transcendental Meditation

Brain Wave Synchrony

Transcendental meditation synchronizes electrical waves in the left and right cerebral hemispheres, bringing about concordance of phase. This fact, together with findings of increased intelligence, increased learning ability, and increased academic performance, may be interpreted as implying functional integration of the analytical and verbal skills of the left hemisphere with the synthetic and spatial skills of the right hemisphere thereby indicating increased coordination of mind and body.

First Reference: Jean-Paul Banquet, "EEG and Meditation," Electroencephalography and Clinical Neurophysiology 33 (1972): 454.

Second Reference: Jean-Paul Banquet, "Spectral Analysis of the EEG in Meditation," op. cit. 35 (1973): 143-151.

Find Out More About T.M.
Free Public Lectures

August 11
Monday 7:30 p.m.
Douglas County Bank
Community Room

August 12
Tuesday 7:30 p.m.
First National Bank
Community Room

International Meditation Society
2301 Massachusetts, 842-1223
A non-profit, educational organization

Following one single paper by a non-meditator in 1973 allegedly showing “Brain Wave Synchrony” induced by TM practice, this phenomenon has become central to the entire body of TM research. Beyond that first study, claims that it is an indicator of a unique state of consciousness produced by TM are otherwise sole-sourced to meditating researchers. PTSD and other behavior research produced by meditating researchers attributes supposedly observed benefits to changes in the brain allegedly indicated by this synchrony, and not to other aspects of, or influences in TM instruction.

The “Maharishi Effect” asserts existence of consciousness as a field, without evidence

- The “Maharishi effect” is a claim that individual brainwave coherence positively influences other people and the environment by some method involving a “field of consciousness” that would violate all known laws of physics and biology

Graphics from *Complete Book of Yogic Flying*, and *Victory before War* co-authored by Robert Keith Wallace

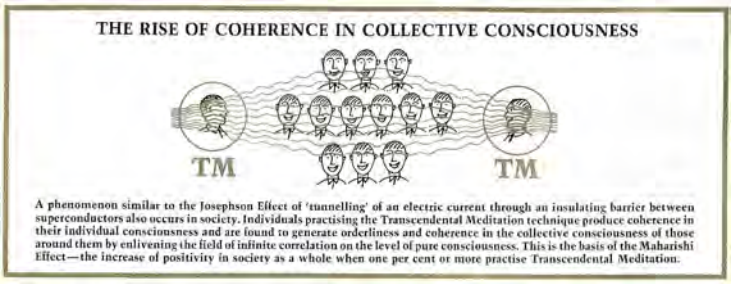
The insistence on brainwave coherence through TM being evidence of some profound changes in the human mind is central to the so-called “Maharishi Effect.” This claim holds that individual brainwave coherence directly, positively influences others and the environment by some means involving the frequently mentioned “field of consciousness.” Were there to be some truth to this claim, it would violate all known laws of physics and biology.

“Scientific laws or laws of science are statements, based on repeated experiments or observations, that describe or predict a range of natural phenomena... It is generally understood that they implicitly reflect, though they do not explicitly assert, causal relationships fundamental to reality, and are discovered rather than invented.” - Wikipedia

The “Maharishi Effect” asserts existence of consciousness as a field, without evidence

- Name dropping various unrelated scientific theories to support their specious claims is common in TM propaganda, here mentioning the “Josephson Effect”

TM movement magazine *World Government News*, February 1978, page 8



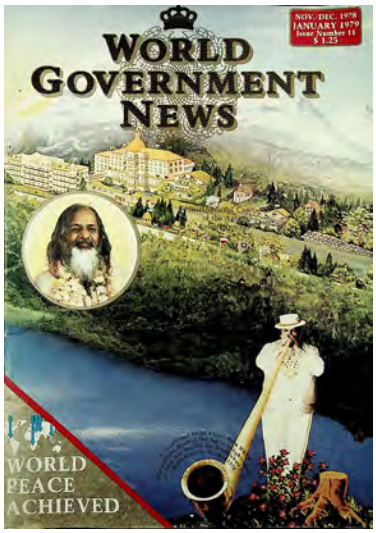
These graphics, likening the individual human mind to a broadcasting station, and similar images are frequently seen in the movement’s propaganda attempting to put forward this extraordinary claim, often used as justification for governmental or institutional support of TM.

There is no substantial evidence supporting this supposed theory, and the scientific research that is claimed to show its existence is, once again, only authored by meditating researchers

The “Maharishi Effect” asserts existence of consciousness as a field, without evidence

“Through this initiative... world peace has been achieved and large-scale violence and conflict, and the consequent mass pain and suffering of humanity, have been vanquished from the face of the earth... the Governors of the Age of Enlightenment, through their daily practice of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi [yogic flying] programme, have enlivened the ground state of natural law and created a positive evolutionary influence throughout the environment.”

Cover of TM movement magazine, *World Government News,* January 1979.

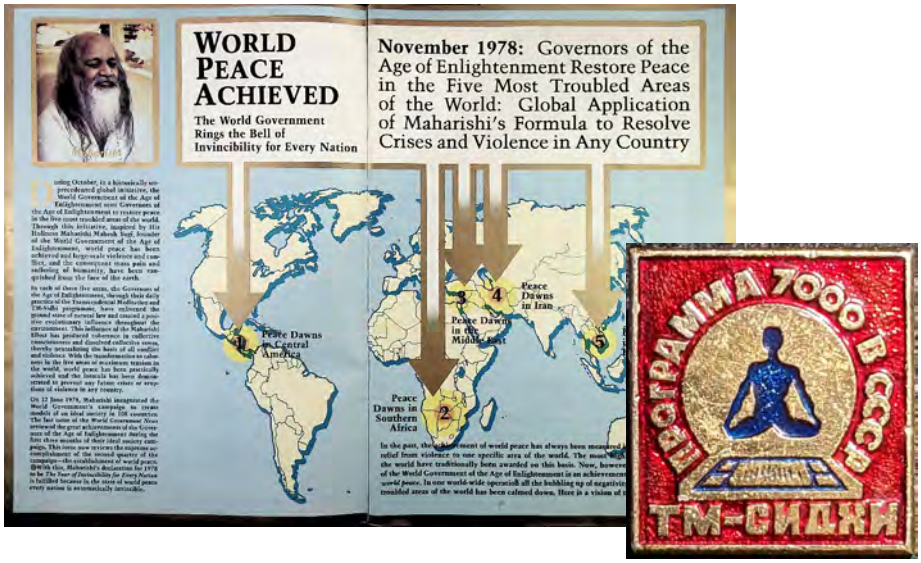


In 1979, TM movement leaders proclaimed, “World Peace Achieved” based on the claim that the “influence of the Maharishi Effect has produced coherence in collective consciousness and dissolved collective stress, thereby neutralizing the basis of all conflict and violence.”

Full text of this issue of World Government News

“Nuclear war prevented by Maharishi's Technology of Consciousness” from a TM organization website

The “Maharishi Effect” asserts existence of consciousness as a field, without evidence



Groups of meditators practicing Transcendental Meditation and the “TM-Sidhi” program, an advanced form of TM practiced for hours daily and involving what they call “yogic flying,” had been sent to parts of the world experiencing unrest and armed conflict. No generally accepted scientific evidence has ever been presented to support their claim of large scale conflict and violence having “been vanquished from the face of the earth.”

First two pages of World Government News, January 1979

Commemorative pin reads “TM-Sidhi Program 7000 in USSR,” personal collection

From MIU's “Maharishi Effect” web page: "... a group of 7,000 would influence 4.9 billion (100 x 7000 x 7000) people, the population of the world at that time..." because math.

The “Maharishi Effect” asserts existence of consciousness as a field, without evidence

ABOUT THIS WEBINAR

National leaders of the TM® program will discuss the principle of collective consciousness and how defusing regional and global tensions is the first step toward lasting peace.

Twenty-three published studies have shown that TM practice, particularly in large groups, can alleviate societal stress and reduce conflict and violence through a "field effect" in collective consciousness—an influence of orderliness and calm that spreads throughout society.

In this special edition of *TM* Talks you will learn about:

- The TM program's worldwide peace creating initiative involving thousands of meditators on every continent.
- The quantum physics explanation of "action at a distance" and how synchronized, twice daily TM practice exponentially increases our coherence creating influence.
- America's unique coherence creating role due to our large number of TM practitioners, and how we can increase that effect to help resolve the Ukraine crisis.
- A new approach to peace based on an advanced understanding of human consciousness.

March 6, 2022 e-mail claiming that their “new approach to peace” through groups of meditators in the United States can “resolve the Ukraine crisis,” 43 years after proclaiming “World Peace Achieved”

Currently, TM leaders continue to use the “Maharishi Effect” to encourage meditators to further immerse themselves in the TM program, and to solicit donations for programs including Vedic rituals in India. Traditionally, they have used the fear of war and their claims of peace-producing effects as incentives.

“Global Peace Initiative” in India

Video soliciting funds for the “Global Peace Initiative” (at 10:55)

GoFundMe to raise money “to assemble groups of 100 Russian and 100 Ukrainian practitioners of the TM and TM-Sidhi programs in their respective countries,” February 4, 2022, raised at least US$ 215,525 from 1,100 donations, including 48 donations of $1,000 or more

Statement on this so-called “World Peace Assembly,” March 2, 2022

The hoaxes, quackery and general weirdness throughout Transcendental Meditation history, origins and management

Hoaxes, quackery and general weirdness

- Assumption: TM is offered by a trustworthy organization
  - Maharishi and his movement were perpetrators of one of the biggest, massively publicized hoaxes of the 1970's, that people can levitate, become invisible, have other “supernormal” powers through mere intention via TM advanced programs – it was just bouncing on foam rubber while dissociating/hallucinating

Implied in TM marketing is that the TM organization is sane and trustworthy. In fact, Maharishi and his movement perpetrated an enormous hoax on the North American public starting in 1977, claiming that people could levitate, become invisible, and have other “supernormal” powers through advanced TM practice.

From “The Complete Book of Yogic Flying” by MIU's Executive Vice-President (2002)

Christina Quarton in midair. Associated Press wirephoto from TM movement provided image, October 1977

All of these claims were false, based on bouncing on foam rubber in the lotus position and, perhaps, hallucinations produced through extreme TM practices. Photos like these were widely distributed, with the implication that sustained levitation or floating were already occasionally demonstrated, or were imminent.

In recent years, the “Complete Book of Yogic Flying,” authored by an MIU vice-president in 2002, made frequent mentions of the possibility of floating, referring to a quote from Maharishi that floating is “a more natural phenomenon, and coming down is unnecessary.”

Human levitation is as real as a radio

I found Peter Anderson's Jan. 15 article "A red rose for reality" quite moving. In his valiant attempt to deal rationally with recent claims of those associated with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and the Transcendental Meditation program, he reflects a difficulty that many must be having. That a simple technique practiced for two brief periods daily could develop "supernormal" abilities appears to defy both our everyday experience and the common understanding of scientific possibilities.

All sciences rely, ultimately, on direct experience. The direct experience of the Transcendental Meditation technique, although lost to most of us in the modern age, is as old as mankind and can be viewed as the first science. For those who have experienced it, there is no difficulty in seeing how all other sciences have been derived from it.

As a long-time participant in the Transcendental Meditation program, and as practitioner of the modern science of biology, I can vouch that the human abilities to levitate, to become invisible, and to structure invincibility (to mention only a few) are as real as the radio and the airplane.

I have been both surprised and uplifted (no pun intended) to have discovered for myself that the oldest science is, at the same time, the most profound and far reaching science.

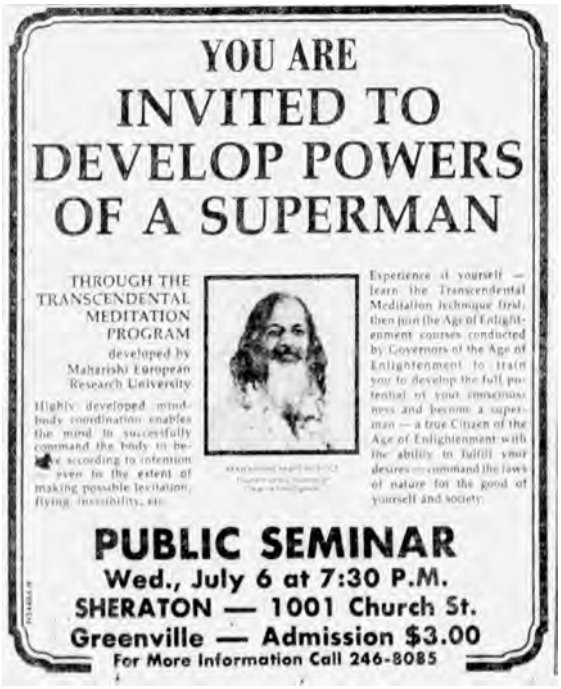
KENNETH G. WALTON
Instructor of Psychobiology
Harvard Medical School
Brookline

Kenneth Walton, letter to the editor, The Boston Globe, February 7, 1978, and current MIU faculty photo

Even a Harvard medical researcher, who is today a member of the MIU faculty, claimed that “Human levitation is as real as a radio” in a letter to the editor.

The Greenville News
(Greenville, South Carolina)
July 5, 1977

“levitation, flying, invisibility, etc.”


YOU ARE
INVITED TO
DEVELOP POWERS
OF A SUPERMAN

THROUGH THE TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION PROGRAM
developed by
Maharishi European Research University

Highly developed mind-body coordination enables the mind to successfully command the body to be-[illegible] according to intention — even to the extent of making possible levitation, flying, invisibility, etc.

Experience of yourself — learn the Transcendental Meditation technique first, then join the Age of Enlightenment courses conducted by Governors of the Age of Enlightenment to train you to develop the full potential of your consciousness and become a superman — a true Citizen of the Age of Enlightenment with the ability to fulfill your desires — command the laws of nature for the good of yourself and society.

PUBLIC SEMINAR
Wed., July 6 at 7:30 P.M.
SHERATON — 1001 Church St.
Greenville — Admission $3.00
For More Information Call 246-8085

Newspaper advertisements all over North America were very specific on what readers were being invited to experience.

Image via newspapers.com

Hoaxes, quackery and general weirdness

- Assumption: TM is offered by a mundane, non-profit, educational organization
  - TM organization is run by a cast of crown-wearing “Rajas” (all male) who each paid US$ 1 million for the privilege to do so
  - Headed by Tony Nader, former medical doctor and neuroscientist
  - Nader's name is almost always followed by the coded acronym “MARR” = Maharaja (great king) Adhiraj Rajaraam
  - He heads the “Global Country of World Peace,” one of the TM organizations, based in Fairfield, Iowa, USA

The basic sanity of the TM organization should obviously be in doubt, being that it’s run by a cast of crown wearing Rajas, all male, many of whom paid one million dollars for their position.

“Tony Nader, M.D., Ph.D., MARR, is a medical doctor trained at Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Ph.D. in neuroscience), and a globally recognised Vedic scholar.” - from Nader's website

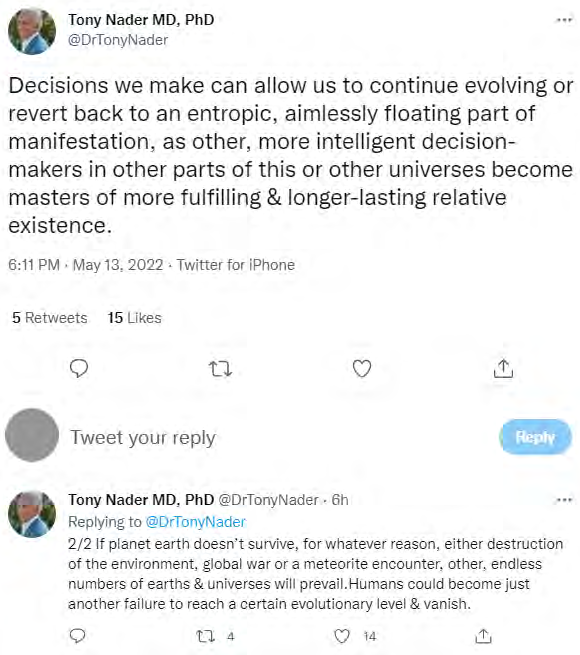
Tony Nader, the former medical doctor who heads the “Global Country of World Peace,” one part of the TM organization, carries the title “Maharaja, or great king, Adhiraj Rajaraam.” There are no women in positions of power anywhere in the TM organizational hierarchy.

Large photo caption: Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's successor Maharaja Adhiraj Rajaraam, center, flanked by a group of 48 "ministers and rajas" who took over the Maharishi's leadership duties, come out after a press conference at the Maharishi's Ashram at Arail, Allahabad, India, Sunday, Feb. 10, 2008. Thousands passed by the body of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi as it lay in state on a throne of flowers in northern India Sunday, paying tribute to the guru celebrated for bringing meditation to the West. Rajaraam, announced that 48 "towers of invincibility" would be built in 48 countries to continue the teachings of Maharishi as a memorial to him. (AP Photo/Rajesh Kumar Singh)

Associated Press images ID 080210011476

Small photo from Maharishi World Peace Movement website

Another photo of Nader in the royal costume also from Maharishi’s funeral



Recent tweets by Tony Nader are evidently intended to appeal to meditators' fear of failure or irrelevance on a cosmic scale. Here he implies that "decision-makers" in "other universes" will survive and prevail over "planet earth" and "humans" that have "become just another failure." Transcendental Meditation and all the rest of the Maharishi-branded products are, of course, his method to "continue evolving" to "reach a certain evolutionary level."

Link to the quoted tweets

Transcendental Meditation versus healthcare

TM movement's stance on healthcare

- Modern (mislabeled as “allopathic”) medicine viewed as a failure because of alleged side effects, infections, errors
- They offer as a replacement, a “Consciousness-Based Health Care System, Which is Prevention-Oriented and Free from Harmful Side-Effects”

Graphic from TM movement's Global Country of World Peace website (2011) of stack of paper allegedly composed of published articles on the “dangers of the current approach to healthcare” – this stack of paper once physically existed in an MIU building lobby

Statements about health care made by TM movement leaders should also be a cause for concern. Various publications over the years, including current TM websites, seek to foster avoidance of modern medicine by an exclusive focus on side effects and errors.

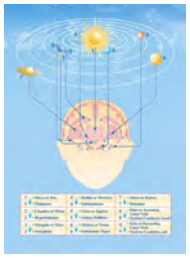
Their alternatives include astrology, Ayurvedic remedies and herbal potions for which there is little to no evidence of effectiveness. Such Ayurvedic remedies common in India are known to contain harmful ingredients and contaminants. Avoidance of healthcare, including vaccines, is apparently endemic among TM meditators, once resulting in a measles outbreak among unvaccinated members of the meditating community in Fairfield.

Image from “Hazards of Modern Medicine” page at the Global Country of World Peace website

TM movement's stance on healthcare

- Their “Vedic health-care system” is primarily the TM program, Vedic recitation, “pulse diagnosis,” astrology, Ayurveda, other ineffective remedies and herbal potions, for which there is little to no supporting scientific evidence of effectiveness

- Avoidance of healthcare, including vaccines, known to be endemic among meditators, once resulting in a measles outbreak among unvaccinated in Fairfield (2004)



“Vedic City woman charges herbs caused lead poisoning; sues Maharishi corporations,” The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, Iowa), March 8, 2008 via Religion News Blog

“Vedic City woman alleges she and unborn child lead poisoned by Maharishi Ayurveda herbal preparation,” from United States District Court complaint. The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, Iowa), March 5, 2008

A Bhalla, A K Pannu, Are Ayurvedic medications store house of heavy metals?, Toxicology Research, Volume 11, Issue 1, February 2022, Pages 179–183

“Imported Measles Case Associated with Nonmedical Vaccine Exemption --- Iowa, March 2004.” MMWR Dispatch, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 19, 2004. “A high percentage of students from college A are reported to be unvaccinated because of nonmedical exemptions. Six measles cases occurred among the students while they were in India.”

Postexposure Prophylaxis, Isolation, and Quarantine To Control an Import-Associated Measles Outbreak --- Iowa, 2004. MMWR Dispatch, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, October 22, 2004.

Gustavo H. Dayan, Ismael R. Ortega-Sánchez, Charles W. LeBaron, M. Patricia Quinlisk, and the Iowa Measles Response Team; The Cost of Containing One Case of Measles: The Economic Impact on the Public Health Infrastructure—Iowa, 2004. Pediatrics July 2005; 116 (1): e1–e4. 10.1542/peds.2004-2512

TM movement's stance on healthcare

- While TM advocates still seek to “integrate” their ways into modern, evidence-based medicine...
- This resolution, dated 1997, to ban and replace “allopathic” (modern) medicine in India, is an 84 point, nine-page rant against science-based healthcare in India, in a book that carries a MUM/MIU 2001 copyright notice

While TM advocates talk about “integration” of their methods into modern medicine, one book attributed to Maharishi and published with a 2001 MIU copyright notice contained a resolution to ban modern medicine in India and replace it with their offerings.

Graphic from MIU website

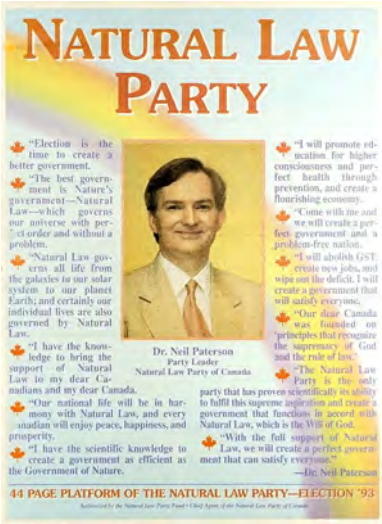
Ideal India from Google Books

The politics of Transcendental Meditation

TM movement's political aspects

- Natural Law Party (1992 – early 2000's) globally promoted TM as a solution to all problems of every kind, without specifics other than universal government support of TM, in more than 70 countries

Natural Law Party of Canada, newspaper insert and television spot, October 1993



NATURAL LAW PARTY

"Election is the time to create a better government.

"The best government is Nature's government—Natural Law—which governs our universe with perfect order and without a problem.

"Natural Law governs all life from the galaxies to our solar system to our planet Earth; and certainly our individual lives are also governed by Natural Law.

"I have the knowledge to bring the support of Natural Law to my dear Canadians and my dear Canada.

"Our national life will be in harmony with Natural Law, and every Canadian will enjoy peace, happiness, and prosperity.

"I have the scientific knowledge to create a government as efficient as the Government of Nature.

Dr. Neil Paterson
Party Leader
Natural Law Party of Canada

"I will promote education for higher consciousness and perfect health through prevention, and create a flourishing economy.

"Come with me and we will create a perfect government and a problem-free nation.

"I will abolish GST, create new jobs, and wipe out the deficit. I will create a government that will satisfy everyone.

"Our dear Canada was founded on principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law.

"The Natural Law Party is the only party that has proven scientifically its ability to fulfil this supreme aspiration and create a government that functions in accord with Natural Law, which is the Will of God.

"With the full support of Natural Law, we will create a perfect government that can satisfy everyone."

—Dr. Neil Paterson

44 PAGE PLATFORM OF THE NATURAL LAW PARTY—ELECTION '93

Beyond the movement's leaders' historical attempts to seek government support for TM, there are political aspects to the organization, particularly today in India. The now-defunct Natural Law Party, once active in 70 countries, promoted TM as a solution to all problems, and as worthy of government support.

Natural Law Party of Canada TV spot with Doug Henning, 1993

Natural Law Party of Canada newspaper insert, 1993

TM movement's political aspects

- In India, the Ajeya Bharat (Invincible India) party (1998-2009) openly proposed a theocratic government based on Maharishi's interpretation of Hindu/Vedic scriptures and tradition, including demolishing all government buildings and rebuilding them to his specifications in 6 months

292

Simultaneously *Graha Shānti* should be performed for every level of government—national, state, district, and panchayat—and to maximize the effectiveness of the government, any buildings which have an inauspicious *VĀSTU* should be demolished, and new buildings should be* built according to auspicious *VĀSTU*.

This will launch the national programme for the reconstruction of India, because when government activity is conducted from an auspicious *VĀSTU* building it will automatically be nourishing and supportive for everyone.

The Ajeya Bharat Party voices an alarm of CAUTION to every party to come together and immediately work out the above-mentioned programmes, without any delay, and without hesitation.

The factor of time is very, very important; any loss of time may be a loss of opportunity. The powerful destructive forces of the world are gath-

* The reconstruction of government buildings should start immediately and be completed in a maximum of six months.

+ Refer to pages 308–323.

Page from the Ajeya Bharat Party platform, "Celebrating Perfection in Administration" (1998)

In India, the Ajeya Bharat, or Invincible India party, openly proposed a theocratic government based on Maharishi's doctrines, that included demolishing all government buildings and rebuilding them to his architectural specifications within six months.

Celebrating Perfection in Administration from Google Books

Ajeya Bharat Party website via archive.org

TM movement's political aspects

- World transformation also involves governments mandating the demolishing of all buildings and reconstructing them with all entrances facing east, with proportions and features allegedly derived from Vedic texts.

Their requirement for reconstruction of all buildings everywhere is a political position. According to statements on a current TM organization website, governments “need to redesign and rebuild” their entire countries by mandating reconstruction according to Maharishi’s supposedly Vedic architectural standard. Building entrances are to face precisely east, proportions and other features are also specified, “to connect individual life with Cosmic Life.”

"A considerable amount of ill health, misfortune, and suffering can be eliminated by living and working in properly oriented homes and offices.” —Maharishi

"Heads of State, Governors, and national leaders need to redesign and rebuild the whole country according to Natural Law, to bring the support of Natural Law—health, wealth and happiness—to the whole population, generation after generation."

- from the Maharishi Sthapatya Veda (Vedic architecture) web page

Image (left): Global Country of World Peace headquarters (Wikimedia)
Images (right) from Maharishi Vedic Architecture YouTube video, “Why do Maharishi Vastu buildings face East?” at 25:13 and 31:16

Bob Roth, David Lynch, Girish Varma in India. From the documentary “Shadows of Paradise” (2016)

Maharishi's nephew, Girish Varma, head of the TM movement in India, has a close relationship with Hindu nationalist (Hindutva) leaders.

Maharishi’s nephew, Girish Varma, who heads the TM movement in India, evidently has a close relationship with Hindu nationalist leaders and the current right-wing government. Here, Varma can be seen with David Lynch and Bob Roth.

Bob Roth, David Lynch, and Girish Varma together in India
From the documentary “Shadows of Paradise” (2016)

Roth is a 50+ year meditator, TM teacher, author of two TM promotional books, and CEO of Lynch's foundation

The Hitavada CityLine

BHOPAL ■ Wednesday ■ December 28 ■ 2016

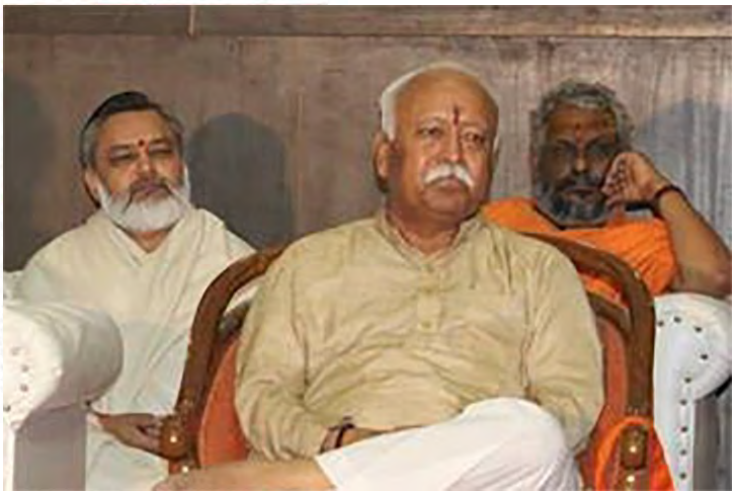
Brahmachari Girish honoured with title of *Vedic Vidya Martand*

■ Staff Reporter

BRAHMACHARI Girish was honoured with the title of Vedic Vidya Martand in Dharma Sanskriti Mahakumbh organised by Acharya Ietendranath Maharaj, Peethadheshwar of Shrinath Sampradaya Devnath Math at Reshimbagh Nagpur.

Bramachari Girish was honoured by Peethadheeshwar and Jagatguru Shankaracharya of Iyotirmath Swami Vasudevanand Saraswati Maharaj in the presence of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's Sar Sangh Chalak Mohan Bhagwat, 1,100 sadhus and saints, thousands of Mahakumbh participants and members of Matrashakti Sangh. This honour and title was presented to Brahmachari Girish for his lifetime contribution in the field of education, spreading and securing Ved and Vedic wisdom worldwide in the interest of public at large.

Saints appreciated the work of his holiness Maharishi Mahesh Yogi for reawaking, restructuring and restoring scattered Ved and Vedic literature, admired and blessed



Girish Varma (left)
Mohan Bhagwat (center)
Chief Executive of the Hindu nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)

Girish Varma was given a Vedic title in the presence of the head of a Hindu nationalist organization in 2016.

Photos from Maharishi Information Technology website or from Maharishi Vidya Mandir (school system) website.

- left photo: Girish Varma (right) meeting with Rajnath Singh, Home Minister, Government of India, May 2019. Singh assumed the office of Defence Minister days after this photo was taken. He twice served as President of the current ruling party, the right-wing, Hindu nationalist, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).
- right photo: RSS and BJP member Narendra Modi serves as Prime Minister, here with Vladimir Putin

He regularly has audiences with India's political leaders. Government ministries there directly support the TM organization and its primary and secondary school system.

Left: from Girish Varma's personal website, “Girish Visits Country's Top Political Leaders,” and from Girish Varma's Facebook post of May 27, 2019. Photo has been cropped.

Right: Reuters, “India’s Russian romance will be hard to stifle,” March 2, 2022, photo from December 6, 2021

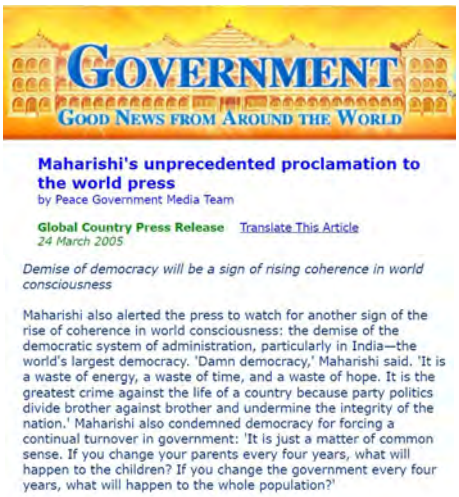
"I want to establish a government in every country that will support life in the country. This drama of four years, five years, change the government, change the government, is only useful to the foreign powers. They think democracy -- I used to say "damn the democracy," because it's not a stable government. It's only useful for foreign powers." - Larry King Weekend transcript, May 12, 2002

Maharishi's anti-democratic comments about government were aired on a segment of the Larry King Show in 2002, and they still appear on a TM movement website.

Larry King Weekend transcript, May 12, 2002

TM movement's political aspects

- Maharishi expected the demise of democratic government as a result of a "rise of coherence in world consciousness." It would be replaced everywhere with some single-party, unchanging, authoritarian "Vedic Approach to Government"



GOVERNMENT
GOOD NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Maharishi's unprecedented proclamation to the world press
by Peace Government Media Team

Global Country Press Release Translate This Article
24 March 2005

Demise of democracy will be a sign of rising coherence in world consciousness

Maharishi also alerted the press to watch for another sign of the rise of coherence in world consciousness: the demise of the democratic system of administration, particularly in India—the world's largest democracy. 'Damn democracy,' Maharishi said. 'It is a waste of energy, a waste of time, and a waste of hope. It is the greatest crime against the life of a country because party politics divide brother against brother and undermine the integrity of the nation.' Maharishi also condemned democracy for forcing a continual turnover in government: 'It is just a matter of common sense. If you change your parents every four years, what will happen to the children? If you change the government every four years, what will happen to the whole population?'

Maharishi expected the demise of democratic government, that would be replaced with some single party authoritarian system under his "Vedic Approach to Government."

Global Good News website,
Global Country Press Release, 24 March 2005

Conclusion

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- Transcendental Meditation and the organizations that offer it exist globally, for reasons other than individual welfare and personal development. These include organization and movement status, influence, sect-building, wealth and labor gathering and exploiting, and political partisanship.
- TM instruction involves dissonance, trance induction, surprise, mystery and non-disclosure in ways that are incompatible with informed consent

To conclude with my opinions on some of the main points that should be understood about TM, but that are seldom clearly disclosed by the organization and by TM teachers:

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TM instruction involves dissonance, trance induction, surprise, mystery, and non-disclosure in ways that are incompatible with informed consent.

Conclusion

- TM proponents consistently misrepresent their purpose, intent, supposed universalism, and non-sectarianism, and they exaggerate scientific support for their claims of effectiveness
- Transcendental Meditation, as taught by Maharishi's loyalists, is likely to be incompatible with US government Constitutional protections, professional standards, and secular, academic, scientific and medical institutions.

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- Basic misrepresentations are essential, core aspects of Transcendental Meditation. They are reasons why the TM organization and its teachers aren't trustworthy, why TM should be avoided, and why it should never be considered a legitimate practice endorsed by government, science or medicine.

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Appendix - Sources of clips used in the introductory video

George Stephanopoulos with Jerry Seinfeld and Bob Roth, CEO of the David Lynch Foundation, on “Good Morning America”

- Transcendental Meditation, Jerry Seinfeld & George Stephanopoulos Talk Transcendental Meditation on Good Morning America, 2013, https://youtu.be/JwhvDnIQ3vs?t=50.

Bob Roth

- Transcendental Meditation, How Transcendental Meditation (TM) Works, 2016, https://youtu.be/uP2gLEDl7jI?t=847.

Merv Griffin, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

- Transcendental Meditation, “Is Transcendental Meditation a Religion or a Form of Hypnosis?” Merv Griffin and Maharishi, 1975, https://youtu.be/wGVKJ5O5mEw?t=8.

David Lynch

- Town Hall Seattle, Bob Roth and David Lynch “Strength in Stillness: The Power of Transcendental Meditation,” 2018, https://youtu.be/iKrvBZTN_MM?t=1805.

John Hagelin, President, Maharishi International University

- Transcendental Meditation, An Introduction to the Transcendental Meditation Technique, 2012, https://youtu.be/ZjT831cjaUY?t=2264.

Jim Carrey

- India TM, Jim Carrey Recommends TM Highly! 2018, https://youtu.be/hhMiyngaVBM?t=10.

George Stephanopoulos, Robin Roberts, Bob Roth on “Good Morning America”

- India TM, Hugh Jackman Discusses Transcendental Meditation, 2018, https://youtu.be/vbJl_ZoGJN8?t=390.

Chris Busch, TM teacher and director, David Lynch Foundation, and Bob Roth

- David Lynch Foundation, Chicago Education Forum – March 23, 2016, https://youtu.be/IPTGjKub9-E?t=235 and https://youtu.be/IPTGjKub9-E?t=3437

David Lynch

- Hikari Takano Interviews | David Lynch Interview, Part 2, at 11:20, https://hikaritakano.co/index.php/video-interviews/david-lynch-interview.

Katy Perry and Bob Roth

- India TM, Katy Perry Talks TM at the Vatican, 2018, https://youtu.be/HosU67APAYE?t=1271.

Bob Roth with Jerry Seinfeld

- David Lynch Foundation, Bob Roth Interviews Jerry Seinfeld on "Success Without Stress," 2014, https://youtu.be/IeRdy6LrOAI?t=219.

Bob Roth, Ellen DeGeneres

- "Ellen Welcomes Transcendental Meditation Expert Bob Roth," https://youtu.be/Lwmel4F5OEg?t=46.

David Lynch

- David Lynch Foundation, David Lynch - Meditation, Creativity, Peace; Documentary of a 16 Country Tour, 2016, https://youtu.be/BH4qD5Fzyjk?t=3381.

Tony Nader / Maharaja Adhiraj Rajaraam

- Coronation, October 17, 2000, recorded from the Maharishi Channel, personal collection

"Heaven is Descending," a music video frequently played on the Maharishi Channel

- Maharishi Vedic University, "Heaven Is Descending," 2007. https://youtu.be/ab3TYtIv7hs.